

European debate on Nord Stream 2

Framing of the gas pipeline project in intra-EU debate in the context of deteriorated EU-Russia relations from 2012 to 2018

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Abstract

Nord Stream 2 has sparked an unprecedented amount of discussion within the European Union. Its proponents see it as a crucial and welcomed addition to the European energy infrastructure, while those opposing it consider the pipeline a geopolitical tool of Russia. This division has centred especially around Germany and the eastern Member States, Poland and the Baltic States in particular. This thesis adopts a qualitative approach and utilises tools from discourse and argumentation analyses to provide an in-depth analysis of the intra-EU debate on Nord Stream 2. The source material used is a large variety of different EU documents ranging from parliamentary questions to different types of official reports. The debate is found to feature arguments from three dimensions: environmental, economic and political. The central argument advanced is that the EU is less divided on the topic of Nord Stream 2 than has been commonly argued, especially in the media. The EU's internal debate has been dominated by those opposing Nord Stream 2 and support for the project is rarely voiced. Furthermore, all three main EU institutions – the European Commission, the Council of the European Union and the European Parliament – have voiced concerns over the pipeline project. The second main result of the analysis, achieved through the systematic classification of different types of arguments into the three dimensions, is that the pipeline project has been most commonly framed in a political context, with appeals to the EU's core principles such as solidarity and diversification of energy supplies being some of the most important characteristics of the internal debate. This thesis supports earlier research on the EU-Russia energy relationship by highlighting the negative perceptions of Russia within intra-EU debate. However, this thesis also challenges the Russia-focused angle of analysis, as the analysed documents show that the debate has focused on internal issues of the EU. These results are highly interesting because they show that although Russia is undoubtedly tied to the EU's energy policy, the real issues might be structural and go beyond just questions related to energy policy.

Keywords: Nord Stream 2, European Union, Russia, energy strategy, gas pipeline, natural gas, Gazprom

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List of abbreviations:

| | |
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| AFET | European Parliament's Committee on Foreign Affairs |
| ALDE | Alliance of Liberals and Democrats for Europe |
| ECR | European Conservatives and Reformists |
| EES | European Energy Security Strategy |
| ENF | Europe of Nations and Freedom |
| ENVI | European Parliament's Committee on Environment, Public Health and Food Safety |
| EPP | European People's Party |
| EU | European Union |
| INTA | European Parliament's Committee on International Trade |
| ITRE | European Parliament's Committee on Industry, Research and Energy |
| MEP | Member of the European Parliament |
| NI | Non-Inscrits (independents in the European Parliament) |
| NS1 | Nord Stream |
| NS2 | Nord Stream 2 |
| NS2 AG | Nord Stream 2 AG, the company that owns NS2 |
| S&D | Progressive Alliance of Socialists and Democrats |
| TEP | Third Energy Package |
| Verts/ALE | Greens/European Free Alliance |

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1. Introduction

Nord Stream 2 (NS2) has been a hot topic in European energy, security and foreign policy debate in recent years. The gas pipeline, currently under construction, runs from Russia to Germany and doubles the capacity of the existing Nord Stream (NS1¹) twin pipeline. The reason for the heated debate is clear: energy is a crucial input for countries' industries and important to all inhabitants. Lack of secure supplies can not only hamper economic growth but endanger people's health if, for instance, insufficient supplies cause problems with electricity production or heating. Moreover, as a fossil fuel, natural gas also attracts discussion for environmental reasons.

NS2 has nevertheless attracted an unusual amount of attention both within the European Union (EU) as well as in broader public debate. In 2017, the Commissioner for Energy Union Maroš Šefčovič stated that "no commercial project has ever been so intensely debated as the Nord Stream 2 pipeline"². Indeed, in this statement lies the controversy of the project: not everyone believes that the pipeline is a "commercial project" but instead a project that has political, geopolitical, and security related motivations. These perceptions are largely due to the fact that the pipeline is being built by Gazprom, the Russian natural gas giant whose largest shareholder is the Russian state. The tense relationship between the EU and Russia and the continued mistrust between the two actors has undoubtedly contributed to the controversy around the project. Nevertheless, there are also those who favour the pipeline within the EU. Thus, there have been conflicting opinions on the project, and whether NS2 is an economic or a political undertaking has indeed been repeatedly the topic of debates, news articles, as well as policy briefs.

This thesis sheds light on the debate on NS2 within the EU between 2012 and 2018. It will give an overview of where and how the project has come under debate, who

¹ Although the first pipeline is officially called Nord Stream with no numeral attached to it, to avoid any confusion, this thesis refers to the original pipeline as "NS1".

² European Parliament (2017), "Gazprom's controversial Nord Stream 2 pipeline", *At a Glance*, European Parliamentary Research Service, p.1. Available at: http://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/ATAG/2017/608629/EPRS_ATA%282017%29608629_EN.pdf.

are its supporters and opponents and how have the different EU institutions' official lines changed as a result of the dynamics of the internal debate. In addition to outlining official stances, this thesis will analyse the contributions of individual Members of the European Parliament (MEPs), as looking beyond the official statements of the institutions provides a better understanding of the debate and the division within the union.

This thesis presents two main arguments. First, the division within the EU is actually a lot smaller than is portrayed in EU documents such as "Nord Stream 2 – Divide et impera again?", policy briefs like "Nord Stream 2: Rule no more, but still divide" by the European Policy Centre, and news headlines such as "Nord Stream 2: Gas pipeline from Russia that's dividing Europe".³ This thesis will show that most of the arguments found in the analysed documents are against the project, and the major EU bodies – the Council of the European Union, the European Commission, the European Parliament⁴ – all express scepticism towards the project.

The second main argument advanced is that while much of the public discussion relates to the external dimension of the pipeline – more specifically, the role of Russia – the arguments presented in the intra EU-debate relate more to internal questions. The most prominent arguments appeal to the EU's core principles such as solidarity, and to the goals of the adopted energy strategy like diversification of supply sources. Although the Russia factor is implicitly tied to these internal issues, it is nevertheless an important result that the majority of the debate has focused on the EU, its strategies and its values. Thus, it is crucial to understand not only the EU's external relations but also its internal dynamics in order to fully grasp the debate surrounding NS2.

Although many of the arguments mobilised for and against the project are well accounted for in the existing literature, there has been no detailed and in-depth

³ European Commission (2017), "Nord Stream 2 – Divide et impera again? Avoiding a zero-sum game", European Political Strategy Centre. Available at:

https://ec.europa.eu/epsc/sites/epsc/files/epsc_-_nord_stream_-_divide_et_impera_again.pdf;

Giuli, Marco (2018), "Nord Stream 2: Rule no more, but still divide", *European Policy Centre*.

Available at: http://www.epc.eu/documents/uploads/pub_8613_nordstream2.pdf?doc_id=2010;

Buck, Tobias (2018), "Nord Stream 2: Gas pipeline from Russia that's dividing Europe", *Irish Times*, 21 Jul 2018. Available at: <https://www.irishtimes.com/news/world/europe/nord-stream-2-gas-pipeline-from-russia-that-s-dividing-europe-1.3571552>.

⁴ From here on, the Council, the Commission and the Parliament.

evaluation of them. This thesis thus represents a first attempt at providing a systematic classification of the different arguments and offers a thorough analysis of how they fit into the context of EU policies and external relations. The main research question – how is NS2 framed in intra-EU debate in the context of deteriorated EU-Russian relations? – is broken down into three separate questions in order for a thorough understanding of the debate to be achieved. These questions are:

1. How can the arguments used in the debate be classified?
2. How do these arguments and the more general classifications relate to broader EU policies?
3. How do these arguments fit into the context of deteriorated EU-Russian relations?

In order to answer these questions, this thesis adopts a qualitative approach, combining discourse and argumentation analyses, to provide an in-depth understanding of the debate around NS2. Before turning to the data and methodology used in this thesis, the next section will discuss the pipeline project and the current state of research.

1.1. What is Nord Stream 2?

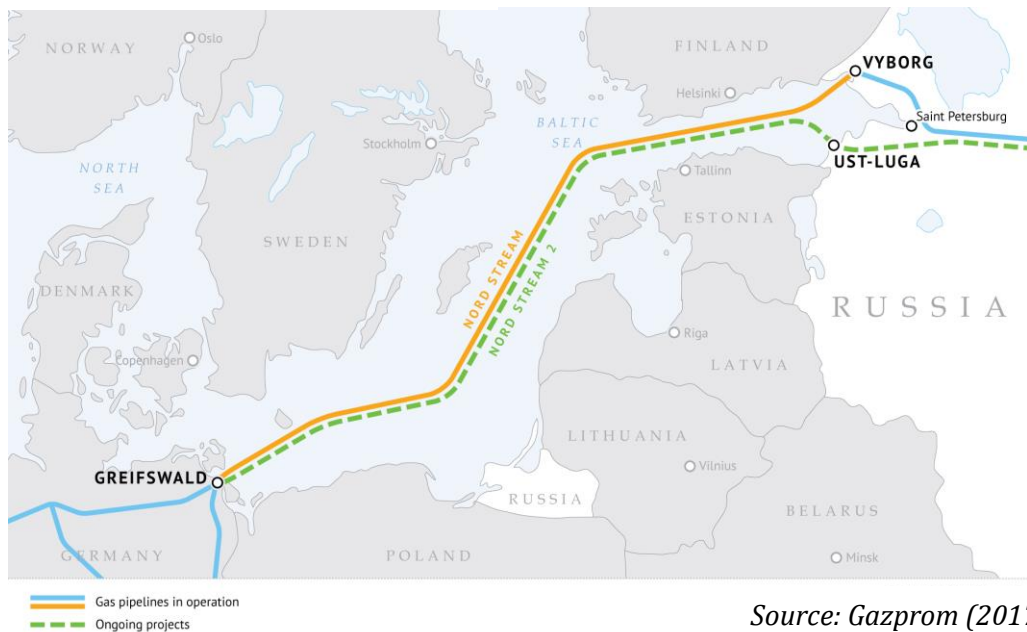
NS2 is a 1230km-long offshore natural gas pipeline running on the seabed of the Baltic Sea. Like its predecessor, NS2 is a double pipeline with each pipe holding a 27,5 billion cubic meter (bcm) annual capacity. For context, in 2017 EU countries imported some 360 bcm of natural gas in total;⁵ NS2 would thus be able to deliver approximately 15,3 percent of the EU's import demand if used at full capacity. The construction of the pipeline started in 2018 and its expected completion date is at the end of 2019. The natural gas delivered through the pipeline will originate from the Yamal Peninsula, located in northwest Siberia.⁶ As seen from Image 1, apart from

⁵ European Commission (2018b), "Quarterly report on European gas markets", *Market Observatory for Energy*, 10:4. Available at: https://ec.europa.eu/energy/sites/ener/files/documents/quarterly_report_on_european_gas_markets_q4_2017_final_20180323.pdf.

⁶ NS2 AG (2019b), "Project background". Available at: <https://www.nord-stream2.com/en/pdf/document/4/>.

its point of origin, NS2 runs mostly along the same route as NS1 and ends in Greifswald in Germany, where it continues as an onshore pipeline and connects to the German market and through that to the wider European gas network. The project is ran and the pipeline fully owned by Nord Stream 2 AG (NS2 AG), a company whose sole shareholder is Gazprom. Gazprom is a Russian energy giant whose majority owner is the Russian state. Five large European countries are participating in the financing of the project: Engie (France), OMV (Austria), Royal Dutch Shell (Great Britain/the Netherlands), Uniper (Germany) and Wintershall (Germany).⁷

Image 1: Route of Nord Stream 2



Source: Gazprom (2017)

As stated by NS2 AG, the company has applied for permits from the five countries whose territorial waters or exclusive economic zones the pipeline passes through: Denmark, Finland, Germany, Sweden and Russia. At the time of writing this thesis, the company has received permits from all countries except Denmark, whose Energy Agency is yet to make a decision on the three routes proposed by NS2 AG.⁸

⁷ NS2 AG, 2019b; NS2 AG (2019c), "The pipeline at a glance". Available at: <https://www.nord-stream2.com/en/pdf/document/198/>.

⁸ Astrasheuskaya, Nastassia (2019), "Nord Stream 2 applies for third Baltic Sea route in two years", *Financial Times*, 15 Apr 2019. Available at: <https://www.ft.com/content/8c665f36-5f7d-11e9-a27a-fdd51850994c>.

Furthermore, other countries of the Baltic Sea – Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania and Poland, as visible in Image 1 – have been included in the consultation process.

Although state ownership of Gazprom amounts to only slightly more than half of the company's shares,⁹ this thesis adopts the view that Gazprom executes its activities in a way that is in line with the Russian government's broader strategies related to domestic business, international trade and external political goals. This approach is justified as the relationship between the Russian state and its energy companies has been described in existing literature as "symbiotic" in that they "continuously collaborate with each other, offering mutual benefits" albeit sustaining "their own institutional characteristics"¹⁰. Natural gas has also been described as "the Kremlin's political weapon"¹¹, further highlighting the connection between the state and Gazprom. It is also noteworthy that the former Russian president Dmitry Medvedev held a position at Gazprom before becoming the first Deputy Prime Minister in 2014 and that the current deputy chair of the management board is a relative of President Putin.¹²

NS2 will double the capacity of the original NS1 twin pipeline. The two pipelines that comprise NS1 were inaugurated in 2011 and 2012. This project, too, received harsh criticism before, during and after its construction, although it did not rise to be a similar topic in EU debate. Whist's study shows that arguments both for and against were fairly similar to those that are present in the debate concerning NS2.¹³ So too was the division line between Member States: Baltic States and Poland perceived NS1 to have political motivations through increased Russian leverage, while Germany and the Nord Stream consortium emphasised that NS1 provides much-

⁹ Gazprom (2019), "Shares". Available at: <http://www.gazprom.com/investors/stock/>.

¹⁰ Bilgin, Mert (2011), "Energy security and Russia's gas strategy: The symbiotic relationship between the state and firms", *Communist and Post-Communist Studies*, 44, p.119. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.postcomstud.2011.04.002>.

¹¹ Bilgin, 2011, p.121.

¹² "Factbox: Who is Dmitry Medvedev, Putin's nominee for prime minister?", *Reuters*, 7 May 2018. Available at: <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-russia-putin-inauguration-medvedev-fa/factbox-who-is-dmitry-medvedev-putins-nominee-for-prime-minister-idUSKBN1I817Y>; "Putin relative appointed to management of state gas giant Gazprom", *Reuters*, 23 Mar 2018. Available at: <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-russia-putin-gazprom-idUSKBN1GZ273>.

¹³ Whist, Bendik Solum (2008), "Nord Stream: Not just a pipeline", *FNI Report*, 15/2008. Available at: <https://www.fni.no/getfile.php/132119-1469870364/Filer/Publikasjoner/FNI-R1508.pdf>.

needed natural gas to Europe efficiently.¹⁴ Whist's research shows that countries of the Baltic Sea also raised environmental issues in the debate, although these were mostly related to marine life rather than carbon emissions, on which this thesis will focus. Whist also argues that NS1 was a "test for intra-EU solidarity"¹⁵, much in similar vein that many opponents have framed NS2. The project was indeed controversial enough to warrant multiple academic studies on the discourse used and the framing of the project in national debates.¹⁶

However, there are also important differences between the projects. The EU's internal market has evolved, and new regulations and strategies have been adopted. A particularly drastic change has happened in the general political atmosphere in Europe after the inauguration of the original NS in 2011 and 2012, not least because of Euromaidan, the annexation of Crimea and the instability in eastern Ukraine. Russia's role and influence in these events has led to the worst state of EU-Russia relations experienced since the Cold War; for instance, the biannual Russia-EU summit, started in 1997, has not taken place since January 2014.¹⁷ Thus, although the original pipeline also warranted some discussion and, indeed, a variety of concerns were voiced, the project attracted considerably less attention than its new sibling now under construction.

Even though the pipeline has not been completed yet, NS2 has attracted a considerable amount of research and has been a popular topic especially for policy briefs. Vihma and Wigell have studied the project from a geoeconomic angle, arguing that NS2 reflects a geoeconomic strategy by providing "economic carrots" which

¹⁴ Whist, 2008.

¹⁵ Whist, Bendik Solum (2009), "Nord Stream: A litmus test for intra-EU solidarity?", *Estonian Foreign Policy Yearbook*, pp.75-123. Available at <https://www.files.ethz.ch/isn/119288/valispol7610.pdf#page=75>.

¹⁶ E.g. on Polish discourse, see Bouvarovski, Stefan & Konieczny, Marcin (2010), "Landscapes of paradox: public discourses and policies in Poland's relationship with the Nord Stream pipeline", *Geopolitics*, 15:1, pp.1-21. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.1080/14650040903420362>; on discourse by the Swedish media, see Fransson, Anna-Lisa S., Faldner, Ingemar & Lidskog, Rolf (2010), "Framing issues and forming opinions: the Baltic Sea pipeline in the Swedish media", *European Spatial Research and Policy*, 18:2, pp.95-110. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.2478/v10105-011-0015-y>; on discourse in the Finnish government, see Itälä, Pekka (2008), "Meille tämä kaasuputki ei ole ulko- ja turvallisuuspoliittinen kysymys – Nord Stream –kaasuputkihanke Suomen lainsäädännössä ja eduskunnan puheenvuoroissa vuosina 2005-2010", *Master's thesis*, University of Helsinki. Available at: <http://hdl.handle.net/10138/232868>.

¹⁷ Permanent mission of the Russian Federation to the European Union, "Russia-EU summits". Available at: <https://russiaeu.ru/en/russia-eu-summits>.

motivate the benefitting actors to dismiss or play down what the authors call “threat scenarios”¹⁸. This is an interesting argument because the proponents of NS2 have indeed sometimes perceived those opposing the project to be exaggerating any potential threats of the pipeline. Furthermore, Vihma and Wigell highlight that NS2 has the potential to undermine Germany’s leadership role within the EU, which can cause longer-term issues for the functioning of the union.

Loskot-Strachota looks at NS2, EU policy formation and the role of private actors and businesses in that process.¹⁹ Loskot-Strachota offers a useful analysis of what NS2 could potentially mean for the structure of the European gas market in the future. She explores the possible increase in infrastructure and interconnector investment not only in Germany and other Western European states but also in Central and Eastern Europe. Interconnectors and reverse flows are important for establishing a truly connected intra-EU gas market, where natural gas can flow freely according to supply and demand. Unlike many other assessments of the project, which tend to focus on the European markets, Loskot-Strachota also looks at the project from Gazprom’s point of view. She marks that NS2 represents an important opportunity to Gazprom to defend its imports to Europe, especially in the context of domestic competition it faces from Rosneft and Novatek. This challenge is also recognised by Goldthau, who further argues that Gazprom’s European strategy can be understood as one that aims for flexibility of export routes.²⁰ Indeed, he notes that the additional capacity of NS2 brings Gazprom’s total export capacity to Europe to some 100 bcm more than its current exports are, representing a marked overcapacity. It thus seems, as Goldthau concludes, that Gazprom is willing to take risks in its European strategy. In general, Goldthau’s research offers one of the most comprehensive assessments of the pipeline project, as it provides a

¹⁸ Vihma, Antto & Wigell, Mikael (2016), “Unclear and present danger: Russia’s geoeconomics and the Nord Stream II pipeline”, *Global Affairs*, 2:4, p.378. Available at <https://doi.org/10.1080/23340460.2016.1251073>.

¹⁹ Loskot-Strachota, Agata (2016), “Nord Stream 2: policy dilemmas and the future of EU gas market”, *NUPI Policy Brief*, 2016-2. Available at: <http://hdl.handle.net/11250/2378856>.

²⁰ Goldthau, Andreas (2016), “Assessing Nord Stream 2: regulation, geopolitics & energy security in the EU, Central Eastern Europe and the UK”, *Strategy Paper 10-2016*, King’s Russia Institute & Department of War Studies, Kings College London. Available at: <https://www.kcl.ac.uk/sspp/departments/warstudies/research/groups/eucers/pubs/strategy-paper-10.pdf>.

detailed look at the technical²¹, regulatory, as well as political dimensions of the pipeline. His study also includes commentary on South Eastern Europe, a dimension often overlooked in relation to NS2.

The division between those who see NS2 as a purely commercial undertaking and those who see it as having political motivations is well recognised in the literature.²² The generalized division line puts the investor countries – Germany, Austria, France and the Netherlands – on one side, and current transit countries in Central and Eastern Europe, as well as the Baltic States, on the other. Italy has opposed the project, although the Italian government has also discussed the possibility of Italian investments in the pipeline.²³ Outside of Europe, the US has opposed the project fiercely. Thus another division line has been argued to have appeared in the ‘West’, with Germany and the US in particular having conflicting stances.²⁴ Although the US has opposed the project from the beginning, it has recently adopted a tougher stance as, for instance, German companies involved in NS2 have been informed they could face sanctions by the US if they do not withdraw from the project.²⁵ However, as the focus of this thesis is the intra-EU debate, the analysis of the role of the US as well as the arguments used in debates involving the US fall outside the scope of this thesis and shall not be analysed further.

1.2. *Data & methodology*

The documents chosen for analysis in this thesis were found in the EU institutions’ online document archives.²⁶ For the time period 1.1.2012-31.8.2018, searches using the key words Nord Stream returned 321 documents, 81 of which were related to

²¹ It should be noted that this thesis is not a technical paper and any technical matters have been on purpose left unaddressed. Goldthau’s (2016) paper is an excellent starting point for a reader interested in this side of the project.

²² Vihma & Wigell, 2016; Loskot-Strachota, 2016; Goldthau, 2016.

²³ Loskot-Strachota, 2016.

²⁴ Loskot-Strachota, Agata, Bajczuk, Rafal & Kardas, Szyman (2018), “Nord Stream 2 divides the West”, *OSW Commentary*, number 273, 18 Jun 2018. Available at: https://www.osw.waw.pl/sites/default/files/commentary_273.pdf.

²⁵ Detrick, Hallie (2019), “U.S. Threatens to Sanction German Firms Constructing Russian Gas Pipeline”, *Fortune*, 14 Jan 2019. Available at: <http://fortune.com/2019/01/14/nord-stream-2-sanctions/>.

²⁶ The Council and the Parliament; document search at the Commission’s registry returned no results. However, the analysed documents also include material from the Commission.

the topic of this thesis. The high number of documents found unrelated to the topic of this thesis can be explained with the functioning of the archive search tools. As they return all documents that have the words Nord and/or Stream in the body of the text, the search results included documents relating to, for instance, Nord-Pas-de-Calais, South Stream pipeline, and online streaming. While each document was checked to ensure all relevant documents are included in the analysis, the majority of the documents were disregarded in the analysis. Some additional documents outside of the EU institutions' archives searches were also analysed, including a video recording of a plenary sitting at the Parliament's Committee on International Trade (ITRE), some answers given to parliamentary questions, as well as EU strategy papers and legislations. The total number of primary sources used for analysing and understanding the intra-EU debate on NS2 is 105. Most of these documents are from years 2015-2018, and thus this thesis will mostly focus on these years.

As the searches and selection of documents was done manually, some relevant documents might not have been discovered. This is assessed to be the case especially for those documents that might have included arguments in favour of increased gas imports from Russia. This is because these documents do not necessarily explicitly mention the term Nord Stream (2) as the project is perceived to be highly controversial. However, due to the limited nature of EU institutions' archives search tools and the extremely large number of documents returned by using more general search terms, for instance, "gas" (835 documents found in the Parliament's Plenary register alone), it was deemed appropriate to limit the search to the chosen key words. However, as this thesis utilises also other sources, such as the EU's regulatory and strategy documents as well as documents from NS2, arguments in favour of the pipeline are assessed to be sufficiently captured.

A further difficulty regarding the used data is the topical nature of this thesis, as this means that some documents are still inaccessible to the public. For instance, some documents found through the document search had parts of them concealed.²⁷ It is

²⁷ The topical nature of this thesis is very apparent from the response of the General Secretariat of the Council of the European Union to access request for document ST 10249 2017 INIT, "Recommendation for a Council Decision authorising the opening of negotiations on an agreement

also important to note there might be documents that are simply not retrievable even in a censored form.

This thesis uses a variety of documents to analyse the intra-EU debate. The most interesting insight is provided by what could be described as the *actual debate*: parliamentary questions presented to either the Commission or the Council. These are questions that individual MEPs or groups of MEPs can present to the appropriate body, most often in writing. This is a key difference between the Parliament and national parliaments: MEPs mostly challenge the work done by the Commission or the Council instead of debating each other. Parliamentary questions tend to be short – only a paragraph followed by a few questions – but vastly informative for our purposes, as the tone is often critical and MEPs do not try to hide their opinions. Indeed, the parliamentary questions highlight how both those for and against NS2 tend to be critical of the EU institutions' actions regarding the project. Parliamentary questions are also quite clearly used as a platform for voicing opinions or concerns and some of the questions presented are rather rhetorical. This is a further reason why these questions provide insightful material for assessing the intra-EU division on NS2. An interesting feature of parliamentary questions is that albeit being statement-like in their structure, they often do not present justifications for their claims. The Council's and the Commission's responses to these questions have also been included in the analysis, although it is important to notice there are less of these than there are presented questions. This is because one answer can be addressed to multiple questions. Furthermore, these answers tend to only reiterate

between the European Union and the Russian Federation on the operation of the Nord Stream 2 pipeline", 2017 Jun 12, in which they stated that "...unauthorised disclosure of its [the document's] content could be disadvantageous to the interests of the European Union or of one or more of its Member States The negotiations referred to in the requested document have not yet started. Disclosure of the information contained therein would impede the proper conduct of the negotiations and prejudice relations between the European Union and the Russian Federation. Should its internal views and negotiation strategy be made public before the opening of the negotiations, the position of the Union in such international negotiations would be seriously weakened. Disclosure of the document would therefore undermine the protection of the public interest as regards international relations. As a consequence, the General Secretariat has to refuse access to the document." (private correspondence, 12 Mar 2019).

²⁷ Committee on Foreign Affairs (AFET) (2017 Sep 19), "AMENDMENTS 1 - 232 - Draft report - Recommendation to the Council, the Commission and the EEAS on the Eastern Partnership, in the run-up to the November 2017 Summit", PE 610.603v01-00. Available at: <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?pubRef=-//EP//NONSGML+COMPARL+PE-610.603+01+DOC+PDF+V0//EN&language=EN>.

the Council's or the Commission's official stance, which is apparent in other documents, too. Thus, for the purposes of this thesis, the answers are a less useful source than the parliamentary questions.

Another fertile source is amendment documents. These are documents which contain the amendments suggested by different MEPs to various reports. The amendment documents analysed in this thesis are from ITRE and the Parliament's Committee on Foreign Affairs (AFET). Like in parliamentary questions, in amendment documents MEPs clearly use the offered opportunity to suggest alterations and revisions to the final documents and voice their own critical opinions on the matter. While most suggested amendments are diplomatic enough to be included in the final document, some suggestions were so critical and sometimes contrary to the EU's official line that it seems unlikely their author(s) ever thought they would pass. Like the parliamentary questions, this characteristic of the suggested amendments makes them an illuminating source of the different approaches to NS2 within the EU. Furthermore, in some cases comparison of the draft documents with the final document provides important insights into what kind of line the Committee is willing to take – a more critical or a more neutral stance, for instance. When analysing both parliamentary questions and suggested amendments, this thesis will mention the country of representation and political affiliation of the MEP related to the document. This is to give the reader a better understanding of the countries and parties most active in the debate. Furthermore, this highlights the fact that the division is indeed mostly apparent between Member States, not parties. It should be noted that those MEPs that are members of either AFET or ITRE will naturally appear more active in the debate on NS2, as they have more chances to express their opinions than those who are members of other committees.

The rest of the analysed documents are various reports and opinions by different EU bodies, both drafts and final versions. This thesis also utilises information from the EU's webpages and the union's legislative documents in order to provide context and place the debate surrounding NS2 to the wider framework of EU strategy and policy. Furthermore, documents from NS2 AG's webpage have been included to shed

light on the official project rationale and how this relates to the debate that has taken place within the EU.

The documents analysed reflect the different contexts in which NS2 has been debated within the EU. The project has been the subject of many parliamentary questions and comes up in many documents by ITRE and AFET, which in addition to the Parliament's plenary sessions have been the most important platforms for the debate on NS2. This highlights the interconnectedness of energy policy and foreign policy in the EU. It should be noted that not all the documents analysed deal exclusively with NS2. On the contrary, most documents, apart from the parliamentary questions, only mention the project in a paragraph or two. The fact that the project is mentioned by name in documents not directly dealing with NS2 underlines the importance attached to it within the EU.

This thesis looks at the period from 2012 to the end of 2018. The year 2012 was chosen as the beginning of the period because NS1 was completed early that year. However, as Gazprom and the investor companies signed the agreement on the construction of NS2 only in 2015, most documents analysed fall into the years 2015 to 2018. Although 2019 is not included in the analysis, there have been important developments recently, which should be noted here in order to offer a complete picture of NS2. In early February 2019 it became clear that the French government no longer offered its full support to the project. It was confirmed that France was now in favour of the revised Gas Directive, which shall be introduced in more detail later, but stipulates, for instance, that there must be unbundling of supply and transmission for pipelines entering the EU even if they are owned by companies from third countries.²⁸ However, only a day later, French President Macron and German Chancellor Merkel were stated to have found a compromise in supporting a version where EU oversight would increase but no power to block projects would be given to the EU. Furthermore, individual Member States would retain the power to decide whether to apply the amended rules.²⁹ At the time of writing, the new

²⁸ Meier, Albrecht, von Marshall, Christoph, von Salzen, Claudia, Herold, Frank & Schlandt, Jakob (2019), "France now against Nord Stream 2", *Euractiv*, 8 Feb 2019, Available at: <https://www.euractiv.com/section/energy/news/france-now-against-nord-stream-2/>.

²⁹ Keating, David (2019), "Why did France just save Nord Stream 2?", *Forbes*, 8 Feb 2019. Available at: <https://www.forbes.com/sites/davekeating/2019/02/08/why-did-france-just-save-nord->

directive is waiting to be formally approved by both the Parliament and the Council.³⁰

This thesis adopts a qualitative approach and presents an in-depth analysis of a wide variety of EU documents described above. Due to the diverse nature of the documents as well as the dual goal of both classifying arguments as well as looking at how they fit into the broader context of EU policy making and EU-Russia relations, this thesis will combine tools from discourse analysis and argumentation analysis.

Discourse theory is a popular method within both sociology and politics. The field is vast and has multiple and sometimes conflicting strands of thinking. At their core, however, all discourse theories study how people think of and conceptualise the world around them. The study of political debate is complicated by the fact that especially when discussions are public and relate to sensitive topics such as security, many aspects are hidden on purpose. Discourse analysis is an especially attractive tool for analysing public debate as, keeping in line with the core of discourse theory, “[i]t does not try to get to the thoughts or motives of the actors, their hidden intentions or secret plans”³¹. Furthermore, as Wæver argues, it is not necessarily important to understand hidden motives because any discourse, even dishonest one, still shapes the political environment by conditioning future moves.³²

As the focus is on the analysis of different types of arguments presented in the intra-EU debate, it is natural that this thesis also utilises argumentation analysis. As summarised by Liakopoulos, “[t]he aim of argumentation analysis is to document the manner in which statements are structured within a discursive text, and to

[stream-2/#3b1c40e76055](https://www.bloomberg.com/opinion/articles/2019-02-08/france-germany-haven-t-fallen-out-over-nord-stream-2-pipeline); Bershidsky, Leonid (2019), “No, France and Germany haven’t fallen out”, *Bloomberg*, 8 Feb 2019. Available at: <https://www.bloomberg.com/opinion/articles/2019-02-08/france-germany-haven-t-fallen-out-over-nord-stream-2-pipeline>.

³⁰ European Commission (2019a), “Energy Union: Commission welcomes tonight’s provisional political agreement to ensure that pipelines with third countries comply with EU gas rules”, *Press release*, Brussels, 12 Feb 2019. Available at: http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_IP-19-1069_en.htm.

³¹ Wæver, Ole (2005), “European integration and security: Analysing French and German discourses on state, nation, and Europe”, pp.33-67, in Howarth, David & Torfing, Jacob (eds.), *Discourse Theory in European Politics: Identity, Policy and Governance*, Palgrave Macmillan: Basingstoke, p.35.

³² Wæver, 2005.

assess their soundness”³³. An argument consists of two types of statements, claims and justifications, the latter of which is used to support the former.³⁴ Although this thesis will look at how arguments – both the claims and their possible justifications – presented in the debate on NS2 fit into broader EU policies, it will not go as far as to assess the soundness of these arguments, which is another aim of argumentation analysis. This is because in this thesis, the central question is more focused on priorities and contextualisation than the strength of the argument itself. Furthermore, evaluating the ‘soundness’ of an argument also implies a normative or at least a critical evaluation,³⁵ the provision of which is not the aim of this thesis. Additionally, unlike some strands of argumentation analysis, this thesis does not attempt to assess whether arguments are built well; there is no discussion on the specific stages through which “rational resolution of a conflict of opinion is achieved”³⁶. Although rarely its distinct focus, discourse analysis can also study how arguments are used. Discourse analysis tends to adopt a different approach to argumentation than argumentation analysis in that it places less emphasis on formal arguments and whether “a sequential order from premise to conclusion is imposed”.³⁷

Thus, discourse and argumentation analyses can function as complements: while discourse analysis aims to describe broader patterns and structures of discourse, argumentation analysis looks at how specific standpoints are supported.³⁸ Furthermore, argumentation analysis from a discursive approach places emphasis on the socio-historical components of the context,³⁹ which, as shall be discussed in this thesis, are crucial to include in order to understand the debate on NS2. The special nature of the analysed documents also makes the combination of these two

³³ Liakopoulos, Miltos (2011), “Argumentation Analysis”, in Bauer, Martin W. & Gaskel, George (eds.), *Qualitative Researching with Text, Image and Sound*, SAGE Publications: London, p.156. Available at: <https://dx.doi.org/10.4135/9781849209731>.

³⁴ Liakopoulos, 2011.

³⁵ Van Rees, M. Agnes (2007), “Discourse analysis and argumentation theory: the case of television talk”, *Journal of Pragmatics*, 39, pp.1454-1463. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.pragma.2007.04.005>.

³⁶ Van Rees (2007) drawing on van Eemeren and Grootendorst (2004).

³⁷ Amossy, Ruth (2009), “Argumentation in discourse: a socio-discursive approach to arguments”, *OSSA Conference Archive*, 1, p.2. Available at: <https://scholar.uwindor.ca/ossaarchive/OSSA8/keynotes/1>.

³⁸ Van Rees, 2007.

³⁹ Amossy, 2009.

approaches highly relevant. For instance, as explained above, the parliamentary questions often do not include justifications for the arguments presented, making the combination of these two analyses useful.

To summarise, this thesis uses a mixed qualitative approach and utilises tools from both discourse and argumentation analyses to understand the debate surrounding NS2. As highlighted above, the analysis does not attempt to find hidden motives behind discourse and does not provide a normative assessment of the rationality of arguments.

It is crucial to note that this thesis does not equate discourse or arguments with action. It is a well-known fact that rhetoric does not necessarily lead into due measures. This can be either because political compromises need to be made or because the rhetoric was only meant as such in the first place. Analysing this, however, would require discovering hidden motives or using process tracing methods to achieve an understanding on how discourse leads into policies, both of which are outside the scope of this thesis. Nevertheless, it is crucial to highlight that this thesis by no means takes the arguments presented by different actors at their face value – a great example of this is the stance taken by the Council, as shall be discussed towards the end of the thesis. Finally, it is important to highlight that this thesis does no attempt to analyse or evaluate the policy-making or legislative process within the EU. Although these topics shall be discussed in relation to NS2 and its regulation, the focus of this thesis is the intra-EU debate and assessing the division the pipeline has caused within the union.

The analysis of arguments was conducted in the following manner. After the identification of relevant documents, each document was read in order to get an understanding of the debate and discourse surrounding NS2. This initial scan revealed three main dimensions of the debate: environment, economics, and politics. This division is also supported by existing literature on the EU's energy policy; for instance, already in 1995 Estrada, Moe and Martinsen identified all three dimensions as being important for the analysis of European gas markets.⁴⁰ Other

⁴⁰ Estrada, Javier, Moe, Arild & Martinsen, Kåre Dahl (1995), *The Development of European Gas Markets: Environmental, Economic and Political Perspectives*, Wiley.

dimensions are, however, also recognised in existing literature. For example, Leal-Arcas and Wouters' edited *Research Handbook on EU Energy Law and Policy* includes social and technical dimensions, too.⁴¹ Furthermore, Markgren has applied classifications of geoeconomics and geopolitics to study perceptions of NS2 in Sweden.⁴² However, the three-dimensional model including environmental, economic and political questions was assessed to be the best fit for this thesis on the basis of the initial analysis of the documents.

After the three-dimensional division was chosen, the relevant documents were read again, this time looking closely at each argument and their justifications, classifying them into one of the three dimensions. Each argument was also tagged with a key phrase in order to identify repeated arguments within each dimension. For instance, for political arguments this description could be "solidarity" and for economic arguments "dominant supplier". It is important to highlight that the analysis was not done using a key word search, as not all the documents necessarily include these specific phrases. Instead, the actual discourse and its implications were assessed in order to identify the relevant group for each argument. Keeping in line with the chosen methodology, discourse analysis was used to grasp the broader context while argumentation analysis provides tools for the analysis of individual arguments, allowing a thorough understanding to be developed.

It is crucial to note that the classifications are non-exclusive and many arguments could fall into more than one category. Furthermore, most participants in the debate tend to utilise many different kinds of arguments instead of focusing on only one of the three identified dimensions. Thus, some documents and specific arguments will be referred to more than once.

The central arguments have been visible both within the EU and in the media; opponents often appeal to solidarity and the EU's strategic goals like diversification, while proponents of NS2 tend to quote, for instance, falling domestic EU natural gas production and volatility of liquefied natural gas prices. However, due to the topical

⁴¹ Leal-Arcas, Rafael & Wouters, Jan (eds.) (2017), *Research Handbook on EU Energy Law and Policy*, Edward Elgar Publishing: Cheltenham. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.4337/9781786431059>.

⁴² Markgren, Sarah (2018), "Nord Stream 2 – A Pipeline Connecting Geopolitics and Geoeconomics?", *Master's thesis*, Swedish Defence University. Available at: <http://www.diva-portal.org/smash/get/diva2:1229509/FULLTEXT01.pdf>.

nature of the project, there are no in-depth studies of the content of these arguments, how they relate to the EU's policies and strategies, and how the debate has been framed within the EU. This thesis fills this gap in current literature by providing a systematic classification of the arguments, identifying most popular arguments, and showing how these relate to broader EU policies. This thesis will not focus on the evolution of the debate, mostly because the analysis revealed no shift in the arguments used during the six years covered. However, some of the developments and changes in the stances of the EU institutions will be noted and analysed.

1.3. Structure

This chapter has introduced the Nord Stream 2 project, presented the various kinds of documents that will be analysed to understand the debate surrounding the pipeline, and outlined the tools that will be used in that analysis. This chapter has also presented the three-dimensional framework which will be used to analyse the debate. The rest of this thesis is divided into four main chapters. The second chapter will present and analyse the context in which the debate on NS2 has taken place: EU's energy market regulation and EU-Russian relations today. The three subsequent chapters each discuss one of the dimensions identified: environmental, economic, and political arguments. The order of the chapters was chosen on the basis that the two first chapters – environmental and economic arguments – are seen to build towards the political debate. Furthermore, based on the number of observations, the political dimension can be argued to be the most important one.

The third chapter will thus look at the environmental arguments and focus especially on emission reduction targets and climate change action. This chapter will show that NS2 has not really been framed in the context of environmental arguments: the analysis discovered only a few documents explicitly supporting or opposing NS2 in environmental terms. The fourth chapter looks at the economic framing of the pipeline. Economic arguments have generally been attributed to the proponent side, as increased supply security and a more direct route to the German market is argued to increase efficiency and thus support economic activity better.

However, the chapter will argue that within the intra-EU debate, opponents of the project have also utilised economic arguments in order to support their case. The fifth chapter will discuss the political arguments. This chapter shows that the opponents of the pipeline have appealed to solidarity, regulation and EU strategy in particular. This result is mostly in tune with earlier research. The conclusion draws together the main results from each chapter and offers an in-depth view of the contextualisation of the NS2 debate within the EU. The central arguments advanced are that, firstly, the division in the EU is not as deep as would first appear, as there is a lot more opposition and a larger variety of arguments against NS2 than there are in favour of the project. Secondly, although NS2 and European natural gas imports are irrefutably connected to Russia, the main focus of the intra-EU debate has been internal issues, and the debate has focused on principles such as solidarity and diversification, not the external relationship with Russia directly.

2. Nord Stream 2 in the European context

The aim of this chapter is to provide the reader with an understanding of how the NS2 project fits into the context of the European energy market regulation and strategy as well as the EU-Russian relationship. It is crucial to understand the environment in which NS2 is debated as it is reflected in many of the arguments made both for and against the project, as shall be shown in chapters 3, 4 and 5. Awareness of the European framework contributes to a better understanding of the general approaches the different EU institutions have towards European energy markets and natural gas imports from Russia. This chapter is divided into two parts. The first part focuses on the most important developments in the EU's energy policy and also presents some key documents that are crucial for understanding the debate on NS2, as they arguably form the backbone of many arguments used. The second part gives an overview of the EU-Russian relationship and Russia's role in the EU's gas market. Understanding European perceptions of Russia will be helpful in understanding many of the arguments analysed in this thesis, as the tense Russian relationship is present in all three dimensions presented in this thesis: environmental, economic and political.

2.1. *European energy policy*

Naturally, NS2 falls primarily under the realm of energy policy. Energy policy is a shared competency of the EU and its Member States. Article 194 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union concerns energy and lays out the aims of the Union's energy policy, which is to be executed "in a spirit of solidarity between Member States"⁴³. The aims include ensuring the security of energy supply and promoting internal energy networks. However, member states retain the "choice between different energy sources and the general structure of its [member state's] supply"⁴⁴. Energy policy thus does not fall into the scope of the EU's exclusive

⁴³ "Consolidated version of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union" (2016), *Official Journal C202*, 7 Jun 2016, p.134. Available at: <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/eli/treaty/tfeu/2016/oj>.

⁴⁴ "Consolidated version", 2016, p.135.

decision-making capacity, causing tensions between national and supranational policies and goals. This tension between policy-making and policy-taking has been explored by many academics.⁴⁵ The tension between the EU's capabilities and national interests has been apparent in energy policy, too, for instance when the formation of an energy consortium representing all EU member states in negotiations with Russia was rejected due to some Member States', like Germany's and the Netherlands', stakes in the Russian energy sector.⁴⁶

Under regular circumstances, new EU legislation is prepared by the Commission and approved by the Parliament and the Council in a process called ordinary legislative procedure.⁴⁷ Both the Parliament and the Council have the opportunity to suggest amendments to the legislation drafted by the Commission. In the Parliament, decisions normally pass with absolute majority of votes cast as long as a minimum of one third of the MEPs are present at the vote. In the Council, passing of legislation proposed by the Commission is done through qualified majority voting (QMV), which is the most common voting method in the Council. Under QMV, legislation is passed if 55 percent of the Member States representing at least 65 percent of the total EU population support it.⁴⁸ This contrasts with, for instance, sanctions policy, where unanimity is required.

Energy policy, and energy security especially, have been high on the list of priorities in Europe in the 21st century. Energy security for Europe means supply security, in other words, "the uninterrupted availability of energy sources at an affordable

⁴⁵ See e.g. Börzel, Tanja (2003) "Shaping and Taking EU Policies: Member State Responses to Europeanization," *Queen's Papers on Europeanisation*, p0035, Queens University Belfast. Available at: <https://ideas.repec.org/p/erp/queens/p0035.html>; Schmidt, Vivien A. (2009) "The EU and its Member States: From Bottom Up to Top Down" in Phinnemore, David & Warleigh-Lack, Alex (eds.), *Reflections on European Integration*, pp.194-211, Palgrave MacMillan: London. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.1057/9780230232839>; Richardson, Jeremy (ed.) (2012), *Constructing a Policy-Making State?: Policy Dynamics in the EU*, Oxford Scholarship online. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.1093/acprof:oso/9780199604104.001.0001>; David, Maxine, Gower, Jackie, & Haukkala, Hiski (eds.) (2013), *National Perspectives on Russia: European Foreign Policy in the Making?*, Routledge: London.

⁴⁶ Casier, Tom (2013b), "The EU–Russia Strategic Partnership: Challenging the Normative Argument", *Europe-Asia Studies*, 65:7, pp.1377-1395. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.1080/09668136.2013.824137>.

⁴⁷ European Union (2019), "How EU decisions are made". Available at: https://europa.eu/european-union/eu-law/decision-making/procedures_en.

⁴⁸ Council of the European Union (2018), "Voting system". Available at: <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/council-eu/voting-system/>.

price”⁴⁹, which could be threatened due to “disruption from countries from which the EU imports fuel, but also extreme weather, industrial hazards, cyberattacks, terrorism and hybrid threats”⁵⁰. The beginning of the century witnessed electricity supply disruptions in Member States like Germany and Finland at the same time as electricity prices increased in many areas, moving energy questions back to the centre of the political agenda. Indeed, Aalto and Westphal argue that the efforts to create a European energy policy were a way of responding to growing energy concerns.⁵¹ An EU Energy Community secretariat was established in 2006 during the Austrian presidency of the Council of the European Union and the subsequent Finnish and German presidencies highlighted the importance of energy questions.⁵²

Since then, issues related to energy have only become more complex as a result of the growing concerns related to environmental impacts and emissions. Furthermore, the 2008 financial crisis and the subsequent economic instability in Europe, the conflict in Eastern Ukraine, and the growing trend of nationalism and protectionism have all complicated the energy landscape in Europe.

As stated, at the heart of the EU’s energy policy is energy security. Despite energy security’s popularity as a topic for research and debate, there are still various approaches to the concept in the policy field, ranging from more technical perspectives to the “popular mantra that ‘energy security means different things to different people’”⁵³. Ang et al., offer a comprehensive overview of the different approaches through a meta-study on the usage of the term and conclude that it is both dynamic and contextual with an expanding scope that now includes dimensions like environmental sustainability.⁵⁴ Indeed, with the growing focus on

⁴⁹ International Energy Agency (2019), “What is energy security?”. Available at: <https://www.iea.org/topics/energysecurity/whatisenergysecurity/>.

⁵⁰ European Commission (n.d. a), “Energy security”. Available at: <https://ec.europa.eu/energy/en/topics/energy-security>.

⁵¹ Aalto, Pami & Westphal, Kristen (2007), “Introduction” in Aalto, Pami (ed.), *The EU-Russian Energy Dialogue: Europe’s Future Energy Security*, pp. 1-37, Ashgate: Hampshire. Available at: <https://www.dawsonera.com/abstract/9780754686293>.

⁵² Pami & Westphal, 2007.

⁵³ Szulecki, Kacper (ed.) (2018), *Energy Security in Europe – Divergent Perceptions and Policy Challenges*, Palgrave Macmillan, p.v. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-64964-1>.

⁵⁴ Ang, Beng, Choong, Desmond, & Ng, Adam Tsan Sheng (2015), “Energy security: definitions, dimensions and indexes”, *Renewable and Sustainable Energy Reviews*, 42, pp.1977-1093. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.rser.2014.10.064>.

climate friendly policies, energy security has become increasingly intertwined with renewable energy sources and energy efficiency, as is clear from publications like those of Hafner and Tagliapietra and Mouraviev and Koulouri, for instance.⁵⁵

This focus on security is reflected in the surge in studies on securitisation of the EU's energy policy.⁵⁶ Although this thesis purposefully will not apply securitisation theory to the analysed documents, due to its popularity, the topic warrants a few words. The classical approach to securitisation was presented by scholars of the Copenhagen School, like Buzan and Wæver, in late 1990s. It combines the realist school's concept of security with security as a "speech act", leading to "an intersubjective conceptualization of 'security measures'"⁵⁷. Despite its popularity in current debate – or perhaps because of it – the term has remained as one of conflicting interpretations. Securitisation has thus not become one, coherent theory, although more recently Balzacq has attempted to formalise securitisation as an ideal type through the systematic analysis of the various definitions of the term.⁵⁸ However, due to the various conceptualisations and approaches to the concept of securitisation, as well as the already extensive literature on securitisation in EU policy mentioned above, this thesis will not analyse whether the discourse on NS2 displays securitisation. Instead, as iterated, the focus shall be on the different kinds of arguments and their contextualisation more broadly.

Many authors attribute the fact that energy security re-entered the policy stage in particular to the 2006 and 2009 gas cut-offs that were the result of disputes between

⁵⁵ Hafner, Manfred & Tagliapietra, Simone (2016), *The Future of European Gas Markets: Balancing Act Between Decarbonisation and Security of Supply*, Claeys & Casteels Law Publishers: Deventer; Mouraviev, Nikolai & Koulouri, Anastasia (eds.) (2019), *Energy Security – Policy Challenges and Solutions for Resource Efficiency*, Palgrave Macmillan. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-01033-1>.

⁵⁶ See e.g. Judge, A. & Maltby, T. (2017), "European Energy Union? Caught between securitisation and 'riskification'", *European Journal of International Security*, 2:2, pp.179-202. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.1017/eis.2017.3>; or Szulecki (ed.), 2018; or Hofmann, Stephanie C. & Staeger, Ueli (2019), "Frame contestation and collective securitisation: the case of EU energy policy", *West European Politics*, 42:2, pp.323-345. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.1080/01402382.2018.1510197>.

⁵⁷ Stritzel, Holger (2014), *Security in Translation: Securitization Theory and the Localization of Threat*, Palgrave Macmillan: London. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.1057/9781137307576>.

⁵⁸ Balzacq, Thierry (2015), "The 'essence' of securitization: Theory, ideal type, and a sociological science of security", *International Relations*, 29:1, pp. 101-113. Accessed at: <https://doi.org/10.1177/0047117814526606b>.

Russia's Gazprom and Ukraine's Naftogaz.⁵⁹ Indeed, the introduction of the Third Energy Package (TEP) followed the 2009 cut-off. This cut-off was the result of a dispute between Gazprom and Naftogaz and resulted in the halting of gas deliveries through Ukraine for 13 days, hurting especially countries in Southeast Europe. TEP aims to "make the energy market fully effective and to create a single EU gas and electricity market"⁶⁰. This, in turn, is expected to keep prices low and ensure security of supply. Crucially, TEP also introduced effective unbundling of the production and supply of energy, aimed at preventing "network operators from favouring their own energy production and supply companies"⁶¹. In other words, TEP has been designed to prevent the abuse of market power.

As Loskot-Strachota has recently argued, the context of the EU's internal gas market has changed significantly since the inauguration of NS1, with more flexibility being gained through market liberalisation and integration.⁶² In addition to TEP, this has been achieved with the help of the European Energy Security Strategy (EESS) and the Energy Union package. Szulecki argues that like TEP, the introduction of the EESS in 2014 can be attributed to an external cause, namely Russia's aggressive foreign policy towards Ukraine.⁶³ Youngs describes the EESS as having "an unprecedentedly geopolitical tone"⁶⁴, which is not surprising seeing that the EESS explicitly states Russia is the key risk to European energy security due to its market power.⁶⁵ EESS has five long-term key areas for action: increasing energy efficiency; increasing intra-EU production of energy; completing the internal market for energy and investing in further infrastructure; "speaking with one voice in external energy policy"; and "strengthening emergency and solidarity mechanisms" including better

⁵⁹ E.g. Judge, Andrew, Maltby, Tomas & Sharples, Jack D. (2016), "Challenging reductionism in analyses of EU-Russia energy relations", *Geopolitics*, 21:4, pp.751-762. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.1080/14650045.2016.1222520>; Szulecki (ed.), 2018.

⁶⁰ European Commission (2011), "Questions and answers on the third legislative package for an internal EU gas and electricity market", *Memo/11/125*. Available at: [http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release MEMO-11-125 en.htm?locale=en](http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_MEMO-11-125_en.htm?locale=en).

⁶¹ European Commission, 2011.

⁶² Loskot-Strachota, 2016.

⁶³ Szulecki (ed.), 2018.

⁶⁴ Youngs, Richard (2014), "A new geopolitics of EU Energy Security", *Carnegie Europe*. Available at: <https://carnegieeurope.eu/2014/09/23/new-geopolitics-of-eu-energy-security-pub-56705>.

⁶⁵ European Commission (2014), "European Energy Security Strategy", COM(2014) 330 final, Brussels. Available at: <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:52014DC0330&from=EN>.

coordination between member states.⁶⁶ Furthermore, EESS highlights that there are numerous Member States which import 100 percent of the consumed natural gas from Russia and calls for diversification (and support for it). However, it should be noted that this also includes countries like Finland which, although it indeed imports all of its natural gas from Russia, also relies much less on natural gas in its energy mix than some other Member States. Nevertheless, diversification and the building of interconnectors and infrastructure are underlined as important actions for achieving a secure energy market.

The latest substantial development in the EU's energy policy is the Energy Union package. The Energy Union was introduced in 2015 and has been described as a holistic approach to the EU's energy policy and especially renewable energy.⁶⁷ Furthermore, at least on a conceptual level the Energy Union has Europe-wide support, which facilitates the development of a shared policy platform.⁶⁸ The annual *State of the Energy Union* report, most recently published in April 2019, lays out the progress in achieving the goals of the Energy Union, which include familiar topics like energy security, competitive and affordable prices, and climate-related targets.⁶⁹ The first report on the Energy Union is the earliest official document by an EU body specifically referring to NS2 analysed in this thesis. It should be noted that a formal Energy Union has not yet been established; instead, it is currently being built through new infrastructure, policy work, and legislation. Nevertheless, these changes in the regulatory and strategic environment mean that NS2 is built and debated in a different context than its predecessor.

2.2. *EU-Russia relations & energy trade*

Despite the progress that has taken place internally in the EU's energy markets, it is the EU-Russia relationship that has changed most drastically since the inauguration

⁶⁶ European Commission, 2014.

⁶⁷ Szulecki, Kacper (2016), "European energy governance and decarbonization policy: learning from the 2020 strategy", *Climate Policy*, 16:5, pp.543-547. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.1080/14693062.2016.1181599>.

⁶⁸ Szulecki, 2016.

⁶⁹ European Commission (2019b), "Fourth report on the State of the Energy Union", Brussels. Available at: https://ec.europa.eu/commission/sites/beta-political/files/fourth-report-state-of-energy-union-april2019_en_0.pdf.

of NS1. Additionally, due to Gazprom's close relationship with the Russian state, as laid out before, it is thus crucial to pay attention to the current EU-Russian relationship in order to understand the controversy of NS2. Furthermore, it is essential to understand how the EU's policies are partly a sum of its Member States' policies, and how the different perceptions and shared history with Russia affect those policies. The following discussion does not attempt to provide an in-depth discussion on EU-Russia relations or EU policy formation – indeed, these are topics on which multiple books could be and have been written.⁷⁰ However, the next part will give a summary of the relationship and especially its energy dimension in recent years to provide context for this thesis and to allow the positioning of the NS2 debate into the bilateral relationship of the EU and Russia.

Russia's importance for the European energy policy can hardly be overemphasised. In 2017, Russia's gas and oil exports to the EU accounted for 38,5 percent and 29,9 percent of the value of all extra-EU imports of gas and oil respectively.⁷¹ Graph 1 below presents the shares of the EU's natural gas imports by country of origin (measured in value). It is clear that Norway and Russia are by far the most important supplier countries to the EU. Russia's importance for the energy landscape is well recognised and there have been attempts to institutionalise the relationship through, for instance, EU-Russia energy dialogue launched in 2000 and EU-Russia Gas Advisory Council established in 2011.⁷² Judge, Maltby and Sharples argue that it is exactly energy that lies "[a]t the heart of the current tensions and the attempts to develop a strategic partnership" between the EU and Russia.⁷³

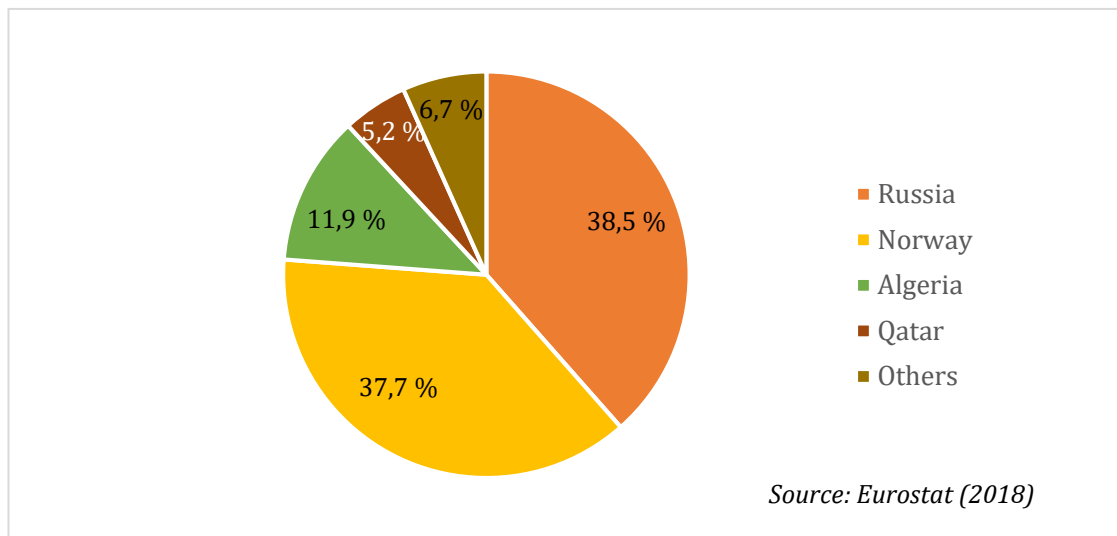
⁷⁰ On EU-Russia relations, see for example Haukkala, Hiski (2010), *The EU-Russia Strategic Partnership: The Limits of Post-Sovereignty in International Relations*, Routledge: London; Forsberg, Tuomas (2016), *The European Union and Russia*, Palgrave: London; Maass, Anna-Sophie (2017), *EU-Russia relations, 1999-2015: From Courtship to Confrontation*, Routledge: Abingdon, Oxon. On EU decision making, see for example Vesrluis, Esther, van Mendeltje, Keulen & Stephenson, Paul (2011), *Analyzing the European Union Policy Process*, Palgrave Macmillan: Basingstoke, New York; McCormick, John & Olsen, John Spencer (2014), *The European Union: Politics and Policies*, 5th ed., Westview Press: Boulder, Colorado; Lelieveldt, Herman & Princen, Sebastiaan (2015), *The Politics of the European Union*, Cambridge University Press: Cambridge.

⁷¹ Eurostat (2018), "EU imports of energy products – recent developments". Available at: https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php/EU_imports_of_energy_products_-_recent_developments.

⁷² Judge et al., 2016.

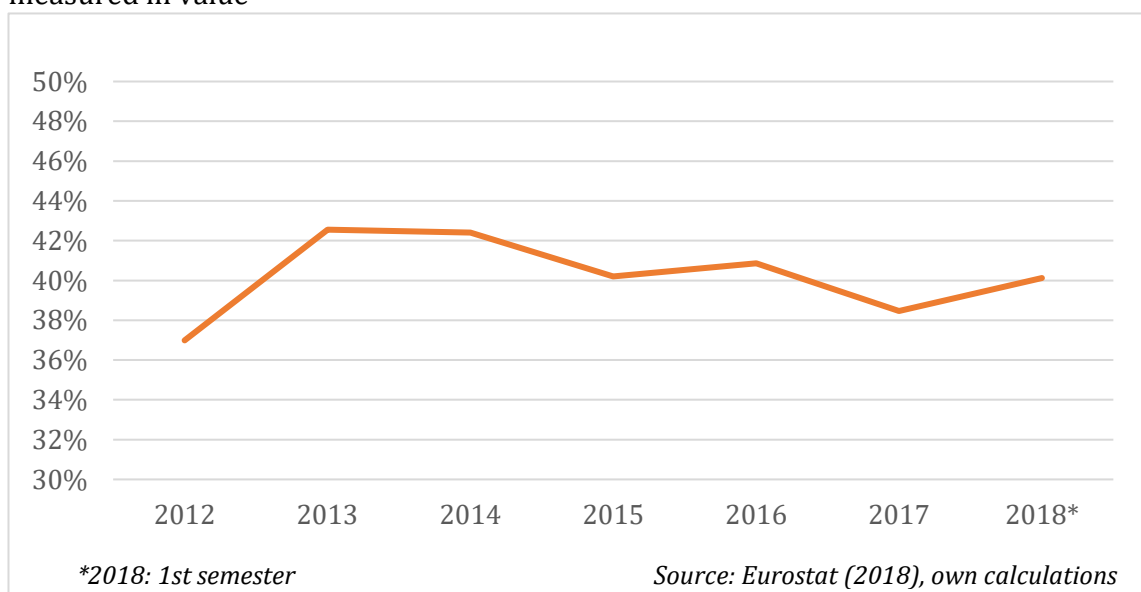
⁷³ Ibid., p. 752.

Graph 1: Natural gas imports to the EU by country of origin, 2017



The historical trend of natural gas imports from Russia can be seen from graph 2. As shown, the share of the value of Russian gas from total natural gas imports has remained fairly stable between 2012 and 2018, ranging between 37 percent and slightly more than 42 percent. However, two things are noteworthy. First, even though the value of Russian imports as a share of total natural gas imports has not increased much, in absolute numbers imports have increased from 77,7 million tonnes in 2012 to 92,6 million tonnes in 2017.⁷⁴ Secondly, as the EU's domestic

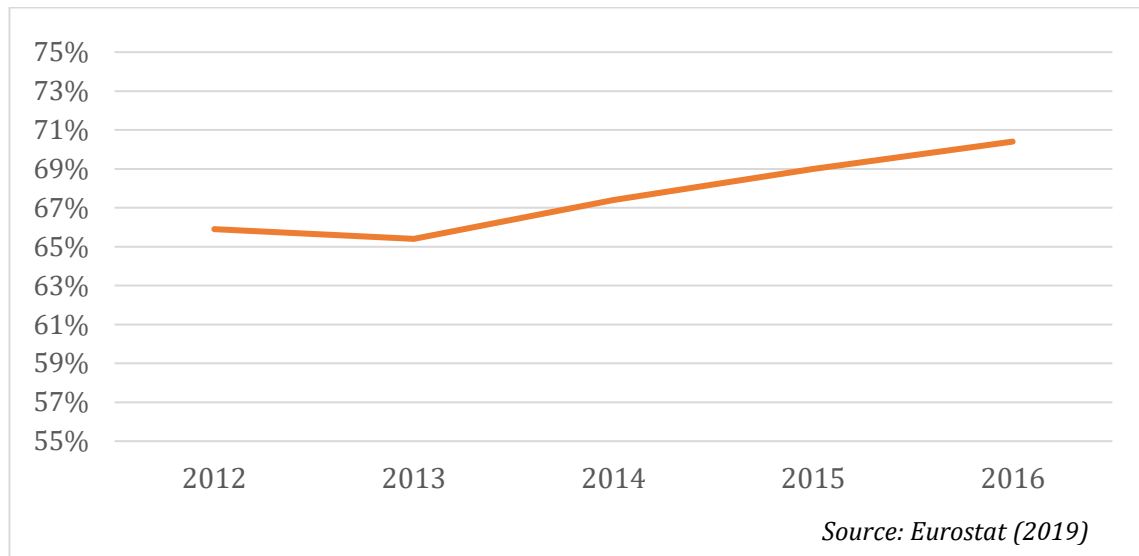
Graph 2: Share of Russian natural gas from total EU gas imports, 2012-2018*, measured in value



⁷⁴ Eurostat (2018).

production has been decreasing in the 21st century, the EU's dependency rate⁷⁵ has increased, as shown in graph 3 below. It can thus be concluded that the EU's dependency on Russian natural gas has in recent years also increased despite the EU's prioritisation of diversification of supply sources.

Graph 3: Energy dependency rate, natural gas, 2012-2016



Although this thesis focuses on the EU, it is useful to understand the context provided by the Russia-focused research. Although the interdependency of the EU and Russia is well established, much of the literature focuses on the EU's dependency on Russian fuel imports. This stems at least partly from the mere definition of "energy security", which is often understood as a consumer-focused, thus in this case Eurocentric, term.⁷⁶ However, there is also a growing literature discussing Russian energy strategy, Russia's dependency on fuel revenues as well as demand dependency on the EU; for instance, the EU has accounted for about 60 percent of Russia's gas exports in recent years.⁷⁷ Indeed, as presented earlier, there are a few studies on NS2 and its role in Gazprom's European strategy, too.

⁷⁵ Energy dependency rate "shows the extent to which an economy relies upon imports in order to meet its energy needs" and simplified is calculated by dividing net imports with energy consumption"; Eurostat (2010), "Glossary: Energy dependency rate". Available at: https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php/Glossary:Energy_dependency_rate.

⁷⁶ Sharples, Jack D. (2013), "Russian approaches to energy security and climate change: Russian gas exports to the EU", *Environmental Politics*, 22:4, pp.683-700. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.1080/09644016.2013.806628>.

⁷⁷ Sharples (2013), Judge et al. (2016).

Sharples states that in the short term, the largest threat to Russia's energy security – here *demand* security, in contrast to the EU's *supply* security – is the development of the EU's internal market, which can challenge Russia's current position on the European market. This is reflected, for instance, in Russia's attempts at receiving a special status for pipelines originating from Russia; Russia has also hinted at appealing to WTO to challenge the legitimacy of TEP.⁷⁸ In the longer term, Sharples argues that it is climate-change action policies that posit a growing concern for Russia. Here it is not only the EU's policies but also those by Asian export destinations like China and India. Furthermore, just as in the EU, energy security in Russia has both economic and political dimensions.⁷⁹ For instance, NS1 has political value for Russia as it "increases Russia's status in its relations with the EU and contributes to Russia's position as a 'strategic partner' for the EU"⁸⁰.

However, the argument that Russian gas imports to Europe could improve the bilateral relationship is now questionable, as many Member States perceive increased energy imports from Russia problematic. National perspectives are without a doubt crucial for understanding the policy dilemmas the EU faces concerning energy, especially because of the role of Russia, as EU countries' approaches to Russia vary considerably. Indeed, in 2007 the EU's then Trade Commissioner Peter Mandelson stated that "no other country reveals our [the EU's] differences as does Russia"⁸¹. Here it is important to highlight particularly the different perceptions of Germany and eastern Member States, most notably Poland but also the Baltic States. The Polish-Russian relationship is characterised by mistrust, and due to Poland's size and central location within the EU, its perceptions "leave their mark on the overall EU-Russia relationship"⁸². And while multilateral relations are supported by Germany, it has frequently preferred bilateral talks with

⁷⁸ Cichocki, Bartosz (2013), "Poland", ch. 6, pp.86-100 in David, Maxine, Gower, Jackie, & Haukkala, Hiski (eds.) (2013), *National Perspectives on Russia: European Foreign Policy in the Making?*, Routledge: London.

⁷⁹ Grib, M., 2010, interviewed by Sharples, 2013.

⁸⁰ Sharples, 2013, p.686.

⁸¹ Mandelson, Peter (2007), "The EU and Russia: our joint political challenge", *Speech in Conference "The Future relationship Between Russia and the European Union: Which kind of opportunities for the Italian Economy?"*, Bologna, 20 Apr 2007. Available at: europa.eu/rapid/press-release_SPEECH-07-242_en.pdf.

⁸² Cichocki, 2013, p.98.

Russia.⁸³ This is also true of the Netherlands, for instance.⁸⁴ From the angle of identity construction and historical perceptions of Russia, Siddi offers an illuminating account of the Polish and German stances towards NS1.⁸⁵ His research highlights, for instance, that German discourse tended to focus on Russia as a reliable partner in energy trade, while Polish discourse presented energy trade as a geopolitical tool for Russia. It is clear that these same perceptions are repeated in the debate on NS2, as discussed in subsequent chapters.

The Ukrainian crisis and subsequent incidents like the Skripal case in 2017 and Sea of Azov conflict in 2018 can be argued to have brought the EU countries closer together in their perception of Russia, or at least in their perception of appropriate actions towards Russia. This is apparent in, for example, the continued imposition of sanctions against Russia despite the fact there have been voices within the EU calling for the sanctions to be phased out.⁸⁶ Energy, however, has been a somewhat special dimension. While the institutional energy relationship has suffered, the EU's sanctions policy has largely left energy issues untouched and energy trade between Russia and the EU has continued uninterrupted.⁸⁷ This is particularly true for the gas sector.⁸⁸ Furthermore, there are no signs that the deteriorated relationship with Russia would have brought Member States closer together in energy issues on an

⁸³ Stewart, Susan (2013), "Germany", ch. 2, pp.13-29 in David, Maxine, Gower, Jackie, & Haukkala, Hiski (eds.) (2013), *National Perspectives on Russia: European Foreign Policy in the Making?*, Routledge: London.

⁸⁴ Casier, Tom (2013a), "Belgium, Luxembourg and the Netherlands", ch. 8, pp.118-131 in David, Maxine, Gower, Jackie, & Haukkala, Hiski (eds.) (2013), *National Perspectives on Russia: European Foreign Policy in the Making?*, Routledge: London; Although it should be highlighted that the downing of the Malaysian Airlines flight MH17 which killed 196 Dutch nationals has put a severe strain in Dutch-Russian relations since 2014.

⁸⁵ Siddi, Marco (2017a), *National Identities and Foreign Policy in the European Union: The Russia Policy of Germany, Poland and Finland*, ECPR Press: Colchester.

⁸⁶ E.g. Nienaber, Michael (2016), "Germany's Steinmeier favors gradual phasing-out of Russia sanctions", *Reuters*, 9 Jun 2016. Available at: <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-ukraine-crisis-germany-steinmeier-idUSKCN0Z50AI>.

⁸⁷ Judge et al., 2016.

⁸⁸ The oil sector has been affected, particularly through the limitation of trade in equipment and financing. For more on EU sanctions on Russia, see e.g. Meade, Robert & Zive, Joshua C. (2018), "International Sanctions and the Energy Sector – Part 2: Russia", *The National Law Review*. Available at: <https://www.natlawreview.com/article/international-sanctions-and-energy-sector-part-2-russia>; Council of the European Union (2019), "EU restrictive measures in response to the crisis in Ukraine". Available at: <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/policies/sanctions/ukraine-crisis/>.

inter-governmental level, as is evidenced by the Council's reluctance to pass new gas market legislation.

Although it is justified to say that the Ukraine crisis has marked a clear watershed in the bilateral relationship between the EU and Russia, the EU-Russia relationship had been gradually worsening for a decade prior.⁸⁹ The EU and Russia have held differing views of themselves, each other, as well as broader European and global order, with Russia advocating a multipolar Europe and the EU imaging an EU-centric Europe.⁹⁰ Furthermore, Casier argues that "[t]he EU and Russia started to attribute each other negative geopolitical intentions up to the point where these images became so dominant that they interpreted each other's' behaviour almost exclusively in terms of these images, rather than on the basis of their actual behaviour"⁹¹. As shall be shown, this generally sceptical image of Russia is present in the NS2 debate.

As shown in this chapter, both the context of European energy market and the EU-Russian relationship have changed considerably since the inauguration of NS1. This at least partially explains why it is NS2 and not its predecessor that has stirred such a debate around itself. This chapter has further highlighted how the differing national perceptions of Russia, often stemming from historical relations with the eastern neighbour, are of key importance. The following chapters will each in turn discuss one of the dimensions of the debate – environmental, economic, and political arguments – and place the discourse into the EU's internal market context as well as the context of the EU-Russian relationship.

⁸⁹ Casier, Tom (2016) "From logic of competition to conflict: understanding the dynamics of EU-Russia relations", *Contemporary Politics*, 22:3, pp.376-394. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.1080/13569775.2016.1201311>.

⁹⁰ Casier, Tom (2018), "Russia and Europe. Back to where we began or a new order in the making?", *Keynote lecture at BASEES/Uppsala Conference 2018: Regimes and Societies in Conflict: Eastern Europe and Russia since 1956*, Uppsala, 13 Sep 2018.

⁹¹ Casier, 2016, p.376.

3. Environmental arguments

This chapter shows that environmental arguments have not played a major role in the debate concerning NS2 within the EU. However, the environmental dimension is important to include as it is visible in many official documents, as the EU has increasingly tied climate policies into its energy strategy. Existing academic literature, too, recognises the environmental dimension as an important part of the EU's energy policy.⁹² This thesis identifies two main types of environmental arguments which are analysed in this chapter: arguments related to the EU's emissions targets and shift to a low-carbon economy, and arguments related to the EU's environmental regulation. Furthermore, the analysis revealed some non-specific environmental arguments, which shall be discussed at the end of the chapter.

This thesis defines environmental arguments as arguments that refer to the environmental benefits and drawbacks of increased natural gas imports to the EU. This includes, for the most part, arguments related to greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions and the EU's emission targets. This group of arguments also includes the so-called 'bridge fuel' argument which posits natural gas as an energy source facilitating the transition from a carbon-based economy to one running on renewable energy sources.

It should be noted here that arguments related to the impact that the pipeline might have on marine life or fisheries are not included in the analysis due to the technical nature of this discussion. Furthermore, these issues were not prominent in the EU discussion, possibly because NS2 AG followed the Espoo Convention on the Environmental Impact Assessment in a Transboundary Context⁹³ and completed a consultation process with all nine states that have a coastline on the Baltic Sea. NS2 AG released the Environmental Impact Assessment report in April 2017, including

⁹² See e.g. Aalto & Westphal, 2007; Hafner & Tagliapietra, 2016.

⁹³ United Nations (1991/2017), *Convention on Environmental Impact Assessment in a Transboundary Context*, New York. Available at: https://www.unece.org/fileadmin/DAM/env/documents/2017/EIA/Publication/1733290_pdf_web.pdf.

explorations on topics such as marine geology and sediments, and hydrography and seawater quality.⁹⁴ NS2 AG undertook this process despite the fact that Russia has not signed the Espoo convention.⁹⁵ For the purposes of this thesis, this report shall be taken as an adequate sign of environmental responsibility, and the analysis of any possible shortcomings of this assessment, reporting and consultation process falls outside the scope of this thesis.

3.1. *Is Nord Stream 2 a 'bridge to nowhere'?*

NS2 AG itself argues that NS2 is necessary for the EU to reach its emission reduction commitments. Indeed, this argument is included as one of the 'rationales' of the project: arguments such as "[n]atural gas offers a cost-effective and sustainable way to achieve emissions reduction targets" and "[t]he greenhouse gas footprint from Nord Stream 2 will be more than two times lower than that of liquefied natural gas (LNG) exporters" are prominently presented on the company's website.⁹⁶ It should be noted that the sources that NS2 AG uses to support these claims are, for instance, Eurogas, an association representing the European gas industry, which calls gas "natural, decarbonised and renewable" and the "backbone of the energy transition and low-carbon economy of the future"⁹⁷. Both of these claims are contested as discussed below.

The context for the environmental arguments are the EU's climate action commitments and its energy strategy, EESS. The EU has set a target of reducing its emissions by 20 percent from the 1990 level by 2020 (2020 target) and by 40 percent by 2030 (2030 target). Currently, the EU is on track to meet its 2020 target and has prepared legislation to reach the 2030 target. The EU is also on track to meet its Kyoto 2nd commitment period (2013-2020) targets.⁹⁸

⁹⁴ NS2 AG (2017) "Espoo report – non-technical summary". Available at: <https://www.nord-stream2.com/en/pdf/document/50/>.

⁹⁵ NS2 AG (2019a), "International consultation process". Available at: <https://www.nord-stream2.com/environment-permitting/international-consultation-process/>.

⁹⁶ NS2 AG, 2019b.

⁹⁷ Eurogas (2019), "Policy priorities". Available at: <https://eurogas.org/policy-priorities/>.

⁹⁸ European Commission (n.d. b), "Progress made in cutting emissions". Available at: https://ec.europa.eu/clima/policies/strategies/progress_en.

EESS includes a package called “Clean energy for all Europeans”, which focuses on regulating and promoting energy efficiency, renewable energy, and better governance of the Energy Union and climate action.⁹⁹ Although the Energy Union has not yet been formed, new rules are set to be formally adopted in early 2019. These are meant to facilitate the progress towards creating the Energy Union. Furthermore, the EU is set to be a climate-neutral economy by 2050.¹⁰⁰ Thus, transition to a more sustainable energy mix within the union is one of the official priorities for the EU’s climate policies. However, some observe a tension between decarbonisation and security of supply.¹⁰¹ Thus, it is unclear what new energy strategies actually mean for natural gas: while proponents see it as a viable option to facilitate the move towards a low-carbon economy, its opponents see natural gas as a polluting fossil fuel the usage of which should be reduced immediately instead of after a transition period.

Natural gas is important for Germany, where nuclear power plants are set to close by 2022. This, together with emission reduction commitments, has prompted the country to look for alternative fuel options. Despite its higher emissions, coal has so far defended its position in the German energy mix due to its much cheaper price even when accounting for emission permit costs. However, because a government commission recently recommended the closure of coal-fired power plants, German natural gas demand is now expected to grow by 8 percent by 2022.¹⁰² It thus seems that the argument, advanced by the NS2 AG consortium, that Europe needs gas to meet its climate commitments, might conflate Europe with Germany. Although Germany is the EU’s largest natural gas market, and thus changes in the German market have strategic importance at the EU level, it is important to comprehend that the energy policy of the EU is not the same as the energy policy of Germany.

⁹⁹ European Commission (2016a), “Clean energy for all Europeans”, COM(2016) 860 final, 30 Nov 2016. Available at: <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?qid=1512481277484&uri=CELEX:52016DC0860>.

¹⁰⁰ European Commission (2018a), “A clean planet for all – a European strategic long-term vision for a prosperous, modern, competitive and climate neutral economy”, COM(2018) 773 final, 28 Nov 2018. Available at: https://ec.europa.eu/clima/sites/clima/files/docs/pages/com_2018_733_en.pdf.

¹⁰¹ Hafner & Tagliapietra, 2016.

¹⁰² Eckert, Vera (2019), “German gas demand seen rising due to coal exit plan”, *Reuters*, 6 Feb 2019. Available at: <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-energy-eworld-fair-gas-idUSKCN1PV155>.

Interestingly, the documents analysed revealed no arguments in support of NS2 that refer to its environmental benefits. The most positive approach is adopted by those in support of the so-called 'bridge fuel' or transition fuel argument, which perceives natural gas as a bridge between the current energy market and a low-carbon future market. The core of the argument is that as natural gas has lower CO₂- emissions than coal and efficient technology and infrastructure for its utilisation already exists, it can be used to reduce European greenhouse gas emissions through the substitution of natural gas for coal. Coal is the most abundant European fossil fuel and in 2016 it represented 15.5 percent of primary energy consumption.¹⁰³ Contemporary, efficient natural gas power plants have been estimated to have up to 60 percent lower CO₂-emissions, representing a considerable reduction.¹⁰⁴

Nevertheless, this bridge fuel argument is also contested. For instance, only accounting for the emissions at the power plant but not at the place of extraction effectively externalises emissions that European energy consumption has. Methane leakages during transportation and processing represent a non-negligible risk regarding the emission predictions, as methane is a much stronger greenhouse gas than carbon dioxide.¹⁰⁵ Indeed, due to these risks natural gas has been even called "a bridge to nowhere"¹⁰⁶. Furthermore, it is unclear whether substantial investments into new natural gas infrastructure are economically sustainable if they are not in operation for long enough. This means that the time horizon of the move to a low-carbon economy, where the role of natural gas would be decreased substantially, is crucial for assessing whether the bridge fuel argument is a realistic one.¹⁰⁷

¹⁰³ European Environment Agency (2018), "Primary energy consumption by fuel". Available at: <https://www.eea.europa.eu/downloads/72dc82643aaf4df287798837ed583be4/1548936315/assessment-2.pdf>.

¹⁰⁴ Union of Concerned Scientists (n.d.), "Environmental Impacts of Natural Gas". Available at: <https://www.ucsusa.org/clean-energy/coal-and-other-fossil-fuels/environmental-impacts-of-natural-gas>.

¹⁰⁵ Union of Concerned Scientists, n.d.

¹⁰⁶ Howarth, Robert W. (2014), "A bridge to nowhere: methane emissions and the greenhouse gas footprint of natural gas", *Energy Science & Engineering*, 2:2, pp. 47-61. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.1002/ese3.35>.

¹⁰⁷ For a more detailed discussion of natural gas as a bridge fuel, see e.g. Levi, Michael (2015), "Climate consequences of natural gas as a bridge fuel", *Climate Change*, 118:3-4, pp. 609-623. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10584-012-0658-3>; or Zhang, Xiaochun, Myhrvold, Nathan P., Hausfather, Zeke & Caldeira, Ken (2016), "Climate benefits of natural gas as a bridge fuel and

Despite of this, in general the EU supports the bridge fuel approach. For instance, the role of natural gas in the process of transitioning to a low-carbon economy is explicitly supported by ITRE, which in 2016 stated that it “[c]onsiders gas to be the transition fuel in the switch from an energy system based on fossil fuels to a system based on renewable energy, which must be the long-term goal in efforts to mitigate the effects of climate change”¹⁰⁸. This is also the opinion of the Committee on International Trade (INTA) and the Committee on Environment, Public Health and Food Safety (ENVI).¹⁰⁹ The 2016 report ITRE also states that natural gas must subsequently be phased out in favour of “clean energies”, an amendment suggested by a group of ALDE MEPs from Spain, the Netherlands, Sweden, Denmark and the Czech Republic, although no time horizon is presented.¹¹⁰ More recently, the European Commissioner for Climate Action and Energy, Miguel Arias Cañete stated that natural gas will function as a bridge to allow the EU to decarbonise and meet its net-zero emissions target of 2050.¹¹¹

It is important to note that those advocating the use of natural gas as a bridge fuel and defending its place in the European energy mix do not automatically support NS2. For example, in the same ITRE report mentioned above, AFET also raises concern about the fact that the EU’s gas imports from Russia have increased. Furthermore, while ENVI states that natural gas can play a transitional role in the process of transitioning to renewable energy sources, it otherwise takes a stance that seems sceptical of further investment in gas import infrastructure to the EU.¹¹² Furthermore, the ITRE report and the opinions by other Parliament Committees all highlight the role of liquefied natural gas (LNG) in particular, as opposed to traditional pipeline gas imports, as LNG also allows for greater diversification of

potential delay of near-zero energy systems”, *Applied Energy*, 167, pp. 317-322. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.apenergy.2015.10.016>.

¹⁰⁸ Committee on Industry, Research and Energy (ITRE) (2016 Sep 29), “Report on EU strategy for liquefied natural gas and gas storage”, PE 582.327v02-00, p. 21. Available at: http://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/A-8-2016-0278_EN.pdf?redirect.

¹⁰⁹ ITRE, 2016 Sep 29.

¹¹⁰ Committee on Industry, Research and Energy (ITRE) (2016 Jun 16), “Amendments 1-265 – EU strategy for liquefied natural gas and gas storage”, PE 584.007v02-00. Available at: <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?pubRef=-//EP//NONSGML+COMPARL+PE-584.007+02+DOC+PDF+V0//EN&language=EN>.

¹¹¹ Simon, Frédéric (2019), “Cañete sees gas as ‘a bridge’ to reach EU’s clean energy goals”, *Euractiv*, 11 Feb 2019. Available at: <https://www.euractiv.com/section/climate-strategy-2050/news/canete-sees-gas-as-a-bridge-to-reach-eus-clean-energy-goals/>.

¹¹² ITRE, 2016 Sep 29.

supply sources. Nevertheless, this perception that the EU will need natural gas to meet its set targets forms part of the arguments supporting building additional natural gas import capacity, and could also lend support to the NS2 project. This is why it is surprising that the analysis revealed no environmental arguments explicitly supporting NS2.

3.2. *Gazprom's compliance with environmental regulation*

It is clear that in the debate on the environmental impact of the NS2, its opponents have dominated the discussion. This stems from two factors. First, in general it is probably more common to present parliamentary questions which criticise current developments as a way of trying to induce change. Second, as the official EU line supports the usage of natural gas in the transition to a low-carbon economy, the proponents of the project possibly perceive the institutional framework to be on their side and have thus not engaged in the debate as much as the opponents.

Many of the documents that express wariness towards NS2 approach environmental questions from a regulatory angle and state that the new pipeline will have to respect the EU's environmental rules and goals.¹¹³ Indeed, the official EU line towards NS2 is mainly based on this 'regulatory' argument. Rather than pointing to any tangible shortcomings of the project, or giving any detailed justifications why Gazprom might not respect the applicable rules, this argument reflects the deteriorated relationship between the EU and Russia and the general lack of trust the EU has towards Russia. The events in recent years have severely undermined the EU's faith in Russia as an actor that respects international law and agreements. These concerns were raised before any steps towards building NS2 were made. Russia has remained outside the Energy Charter Treaty framework, and already in 2012 the Council expressed suspicion towards Russia's "willingness to share in

¹¹³ European Commission (2015 Nov 19), "Commission staff working document: On the European Energy Security Strategy", ST 14355 2015 INIT, Brussels. Available at: <https://data.consilium.europa.eu/doc/document/ST-14355-2015-INIT/en/pdf> ; Council of the European Union (2017 Jun 26), "3554 Transport, Telecommunications and Energy", ST 10642 2017 INIT, Brussels. Available at: <https://data.consilium.europa.eu/doc/document/ST-10642-2017-INIT/en/pdf> ; AFET, 2017 Sep 19.

practice with the EU common principles such as achieving...environmentally sustainable markets”¹¹⁴. The Energy Charter Treaty is an international, multilateral agreement with fifty-three signatories and contracting parties, including the EU and Euratom. Its aim is to work towards “more open and competitive energy markets”¹¹⁵. It can thus be argued that at least partly this regulatory approach to environmental issues is more reflective of the general lack of trust in Russia than any tangible environmental issues identified in the NS2 project.

Apart from the regulatory angle, the analysed documents also revealed other arguments against NS2 based on environmental concerns. Some actors within the Union’s institutions perceive NS2 as a counterproductive investment when it comes to common environmental goals. For instance, in an amendment document relating to a motion for a Parliament resolution, Dario Tamburrano and Rosa D’Amato (Italy, EFDD) suggest that the Parliament should express “deep concern about any further expenditure in fossil infrastructures in any point of the Energy Union, including the proposed doubling of capacity of the Nord Stream pipeline”¹¹⁶. Similar kind of view is reflected in a question that Jeppe Kofod (Denmark, S&D) presented to the Commission in the Parliament, in which he argued that NS2 “will effectively keep Europe dependent...on fossil fuels”¹¹⁷.

A 2016 opinion by ENVI, while not explicitly taking a stance for or against the NS2 project, points out that EU gas demand has been consistently overestimated in the past, and any infrastructure investments should reflect the assumption of decreased demand.¹¹⁸ However, 2016-2017 saw 7 consecutive quarters of increased natural gas demand in the EU; only Q4 of 2017 saw a 2 percent decrease measured year-on-year.¹¹⁹ Q2 and Q3 of 2018, the latest reports available, have reported a decrease in

¹¹⁴ Council of European Union (2012 May 11), “Relations with Russia: Key outstanding issues for the EU in its relations with Russia”, ST 9822 2012 INIT, Brussels. Available at: <https://data.consilium.europa.eu/doc/document/ST-9822-2012-INIT/en/pdf>.

¹¹⁵ International Energy Charter (2019), “The Energy Charter Treaty”. Available at: <https://energycharter.org/process/energy-charter-treaty-1994/energy-charter-treaty/>.

¹¹⁶ ITRE, 2016 Jun 16, p.85.

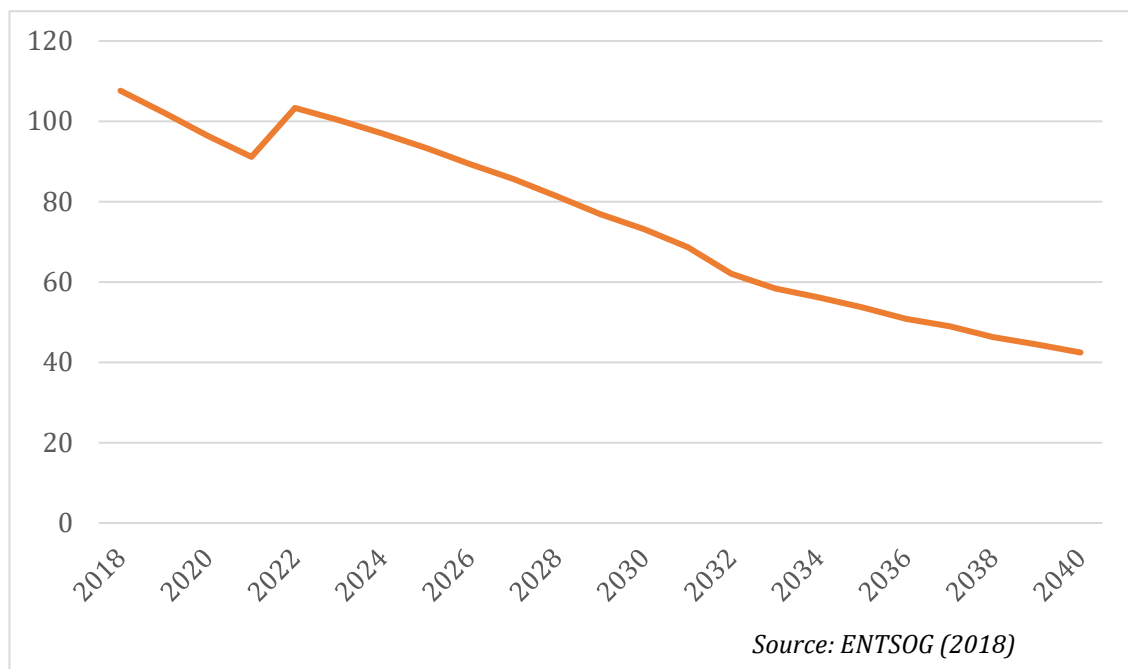
¹¹⁷ Kofod, Jeppe (2017 Mar 27), “Rejection of Nord Stream 2 project on grounds of European security”, P-002042/2017. http://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/P-8-2017-002042_EN.pdf.

¹¹⁸ ITRE, 2016 Sep 29.

¹¹⁹ European Commission, 2018c.

the EU's gas demand (8 percent and 5 percent respectively).¹²⁰ In general, reports on EU gas markets highlight the unpredictability and weather-dependency of gas consumption; lower than average temperatures increase the demand while higher than average temperatures lower the demand. The share of natural gas in primary energy demand is expected to stay stable or decline slightly by 2050.¹²¹ However, the EU's domestic production is expected to decline, as shown in graph 4, especially due to the closure of the Groningen fields in the Netherlands. Thus, it is not clear whether more investment into import infrastructure is actually counterproductive regarding the long-term energy mix of the EU and its emission targets.

Graph 4: Indigenous conventional production, bcm/a, 2018-2040



¹²⁰ European Commission (2018d), "Quarterly report on European gas markets", *Market Observatory for Energy*, 11:2. Available at: https://ec.europa.eu/energy/sites/ener/files/documents/quarterly_report_on_european_gas_markets_q2_2018.pdf; European Commission (2018e), "Quarterly report on European gas markets", *Market Observatory for Energy*, 11:3. Available at: https://ec.europa.eu/energy/sites/ener/files/documents/quarterly_report_on_european_gas_markets_q3_2018.pdf.

¹²¹ European Commission (2016b) "EU Reference Scenario 2016 – Energy, transport and GHG emissions, trends to 2050". Available at: https://ec.europa.eu/energy/sites/ener/files/documents/ref2016_report_final-web.pdf; European Commission (2018b), "In-depth analysis in support of the Commission communication COM(2018) 773". Available at: https://ec.europa.eu/clima/sites/clima/files/docs/pages/com_2018_733_analysis_in_support_en_0.pdf.

Some of the environmental arguments against the NS2 are rather vague, like the one presented by Anna Elżbieta Fotyga (Poland, ECR), one of the most consistent and active opponents of NS2. She asks the Commission how it sees the fact that the project presents “substantial environmental risks and challenges” without, however, clarifying what these might actually be.¹²² In general, those documents that contain environmental arguments against NS2 tend to also discuss the project from a political or economic angle, only using the environmental argument as a further justification for their stance against it. For example, in the question presented to the Commission by Michał Marusik (Poland, ENF), who raises the issue of reports of increased pollution in the construction sites of NS2, environmental issues seem like a secondary consideration as this point is presented after discussing the joint Polish and Ukrainian statement that labels NS2 as a threat to EU countries.¹²³ In addition to the low number of environmental arguments discovered in the analysed documents, this tendency supports the conclusion that environmental and emissions-related arguments have not played a large role in the intra-EU debate on NS2.

Because of the EU’s emphasis on climate change action, it is surprising that the environmental considerations of increased natural gas imports have not been much debated or discussed within the EU, at least with regards to NS2. Environmental arguments appear only in a few documents, and even in the parliamentary questions – which otherwise offer a wide range of arguments, as shown in the next chapters – only three analysed questions referred to the environmental dimension. Furthermore, those documents that do discuss the environmental dimension tend to use it as an additional argument supporting more politically or economically oriented arguments. Although parliamentary questions raised doubts on the environmental impact, most analysed EU documents adopt the view that increased natural gas imports – and thus potentially NS2, too – are beneficial for the EU’s environmental targets. In most cases, this argument is based on the bridge fuel

¹²² Fotyga, Anna Elżbieta (2018 Jul 11), “Ten threats posed by the possible construction of the Nord Stream 2 gas pipeline”, P-003817/2018. http://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/P-8-2018-003817_EN.pdf.

¹²³ Marusik, Michał (2018 Jul 17), “Commission’s stance on the construction of the Nord Stream 2 pipeline”, E-003988/2018. http://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/E-8-2018-003988_EN.pdf.

argument, either explicitly or implicitly. It is thus concluded that the consensus within the union is that from an environmental standpoint, the NS2 project makes sense to the EU.

The lack of arguments regarding the environmental impact contrasts sharply with the abundance of political arguments relating to the construction of NS2, the topic of chapter 5. But first, the analysis turns to the economic dimension.

4. Economic arguments

This chapter discusses arguments that primarily relate to economic considerations, for instance, prices or economic growth. Arguments relating to competition and monopolies are also included in this group. The chapter argues that somewhat surprisingly, the debate on NS2 has focused relatively little on the economic consequences of the pipeline. This dimension, just as the environmental dimension presented in chapter 3, is also dominated by those opposing the pipeline.

4.1. *Does NS2 make economic sense?*

According to the European Commission, energy security underpins the “future economic prosperity” of the EU.¹²⁴ It is thus clear that sufficient and reliable energy flows have an economic dimension. NS2 AG, in other words Gazprom, operates on the basis that NS2 is beneficial to Europe from an economic standpoint, and NS2 AG presents multiple economic justifications for the project. It expects NS2 to reduce gas prices in Germany and, through interconnectors and reverse flows, in its neighbouring countries and wider Europe.

Because NS2 is the shortest route between the origins of the gas and its destination and follows the already established route of NS1, the company presents it as a cheaper transmission route than onshore pipelines or LNG. Russian gas is stated to be “among the most cost-effective sources” of natural gas to Europe.¹²⁵ NS2 AG also maintains that it will improve competition within Europe: “[b]y making more affordable Russian gas available, the pipeline will not only create an appealing alternative to LNG imports, but also reduce overall import prices. This equals big savings on Europe’s gas import bill, especially in a tight global gas market when LNG demand is high in other regions.”¹²⁶ Indeed, a representative of NS2 AG has even

¹²⁴ European Commission, 2015 Nov 19.

¹²⁵ NG2 AG (2018), “Questions and answers: Nord Stream 2 – a new natural gas pipeline through the Baltic Sea”. Available at: <https://www.nord-stream2.com/en/pdf/document/38/>.

¹²⁶ NS2 AG (2019d), “Why Europe needs Nord Stream 2”. Available at: <https://www.nord-stream2.com/project/rationale/>.

written a paper addressing some of the opposing claims, mainly building on the argument that increased gas through NS2 will increase competition and thus benefit consumers.¹²⁷

It is interesting that none of the 81 documents analysed that explicitly mention NS2 present economic arguments in favour of the pipeline project. This could be a result of the document selection bias discussed in the methodology section: it is possible that the proponents of the pipeline have argued in favour of increased imports on a more general level, leaving the highly contentious NS2 project unmentioned, and thus the document has not been found under the search terms presented earlier. It is also possible – and perhaps even more plausible – that this is because the debate within the EU has focused on the political and regulatory aspects of the project; as will be discussed in the next chapter, the political arguments have dominated the debate. It is nevertheless interesting that none of the proponents of the project have attempted to frame the discussion in explicitly economic terms, through cheaper gas prices, for instance. One reason for this could be the predatory pricing strategies used by Gazprom in Eastern European countries. Indeed, Gazprom's previous pricing policies are one of the key economic arguments used against NS2, as is discussed below.

The analysis revealed multiple economic arguments used against the project. At the most extreme end are arguments which question the economic basis or the business rationale of the project. For instance, in a parliamentary question Nikolay Barekov (Bulgaria) and Zdzisław Krasnodębski (Poland) on behalf of the ECR Group argue that "[t]he economic rationale behind the project is also dubious given that the utilisation rate of the existing Nord Stream pipeline's capacity is currently around 50%"¹²⁸. Those questioning the economic rationale see NS2 instead as a political tool of the Russian government as the Russian state is Gazprom's largest owner. The next chapter looks at these political arguments in more detail, but it is important to

¹²⁷ Barnes, Alex (2017), "Nord Stream 2 – friend or enemy of energy security in Europe?", *IDEAS Working Paper Series from RePEc*, St. Louis. Available at: <https://ideas.repec.org/p/eps/cepswp/13325.html>.

¹²⁸ Barekov, Nikolay & Krasnodębski, Zdzisław (2016 Jan 21), "Impact of Nord Stream 2 on the gas market in the CEE region", O-000007/2016. http://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/O-8-2016-000007_EN.pdf.

note here that they relate very closely to the economic arguments, and indeed often overlap. The profitability of NS2 depends on multiple variables, including LNG prices as well as Ukraine's transit fees.¹²⁹ It should be noted that Russia has already considerably reduced gas transit through Ukraine, and that the transit contract between Gazprom and Naftogaz is expiring 31 December 2019.¹³⁰ As recounted in chapter 2, Gazprom's European strategy has focused on ensuring flexibility of exports, but this strategy has also considerable risks due to high infrastructure costs.

4.2. *Market efficiency as an EU priority*

The most common arguments presented against NS2, however, are not related to the motivations of the pipeline project. Instead, they focus on efficient market structure: market power and competition, Gazprom's role as a dominant supplier, and regulation. Implicitly these arguments contrast the liberal market identity of the EU with the assumption that Gazprom will not 'play by the rules'. These arguments highlight that allowing Gazprom increased access to European markets further increases its market power and bolsters its position as a dominant supplier, and thus reduces competition, goes against the liberal values of the EU's energy market structure, and possibly undermines EU regulation. As mentioned earlier, concerns relating to the abuse of market power are not unfounded: only in May 2018, the EU and Gazprom closed a seven-year court case related to Gazprom charging higher prices in Eastern Europe. "The EU's longest running antitrust saga" ended in no fines – which could have amounted up to 10 percent of its global turnover under EU legislation – imposed on Gazprom as the competition authority stated that "Gazprom's concessions allay concerns of market abuse".¹³¹ The two parties finalised the deal a year earlier but the closing of the case was delayed by heavy criticism from several eastern Member States.

¹²⁹ Schulte, Simon (2016), "Nord Stream 2: Gazprom's answer to a strategic disadvantage?", Institute of Energy Economics, University of Cologne. Available at: <https://www.ewi.uni-koeln.de/en/nord-stream-2-gazproms-answer-to-a-strategic-disadvantage/>.

¹³⁰ Pirani, Simon & Yafimava, Katja (2016), "Russian gas transit across Ukraine post-2019", *OIES paper: NG 105*, Oxford. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.26889/9781784670542>.

¹³¹ Chee, Yun Foo & de Carbonnel, Alissa (2018), "EU ends antitrust case against Gazprom without fines", *Reuters*, 24 May 2018. Available at: <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-eu-gazprom-antitrust-idUSKCN1IP11V>.

Indeed, the criticism towards this decision is apparent in the arguments against NS2, too. For instance, in a 2018 Parliamentary question, a group of seven MEPs from Poland, Lithuania, Estonia and Luxembourg asked “[w]hy did the Commission decide to separate Gazprom antitrust proceedings from the Nord Stream 2 issue, despite knowing that the construction of Nord Stream 2 will bolster the dominant position of Gazprom on the EU gas market?”¹³². This group is also an excellent example of how the issue of NS2 is divided by state borders more than Parliamentary groups or ideologies,¹³³ as the MEPs represent five different groups: NI (Jacek Saryusz-Wolski), PPE (Laima Liucija Andrikiienė, Algirdas Saudargas), ALDE (Petras Auštrevičius), ECR (Zdzisław Krasnodębski) and VERTS/ALE (Indrek Tarand, Claude Turmes).

Furthermore, MEPs Fotyga and Charles Tannock (UK; on behalf of the ECR group) refer to the unfair pricing practice in 2016 already, although they did not name NS2 or Gazprom explicitly. They suggested an amendment to an AFET opinion, in which they state that

“...the Commission should attempt, within its competence and with respect to the rules of subsidiarity and proportionality, to ensure that dominant gas suppliers in a region do not abuse their position in breach of EU antitrust rules, with particular reference to unfair prices charged in Member States as well as to the use of interruptions in supplies for economic and political blackmail.”¹³⁴

This suggested amendment did not, however, make its way to the final Decision of the European Parliament and of the Council.

The concerns about the impact NS2 would have on competition date to the beginning of the debate. In 2015, Inese Vaidere (Latvia, EPP) stated that NS2

¹³² Saryusz-Wolski, Jacek, Andrikiienė, Laima Liucija, Auštrevičius, Petras, Krasnodębski, Zdzisław, Tarand, Indrek, Turmes, Claude & Saudargas, Algirdas (2018 May 17) “Gazprom’s acquittal instead of sanctions”, P-002663/2018. http://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/P-8-2018-002663_EN.pdf; similar question presented a week later by Jadwiga Wiśniewska (ECR, Poland), Wiśniewska, Jadwiga (2018 May 23), “Nord Stream 2 violating the principle of energy solidarity”, P-002729/2018. http://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/P-8-2018-002729_EN.pdf.

¹³³ Although some groups like Verts/ALE and ALDE seem to consistently oppose NS2.

¹³⁴ Committee on Foreign Affairs (AFET) (2016 Jun 15), “Amendments 9-46: Draft Opinion”, PE 584.262v01-00, European Parliament. <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?pubRef=-//EP//NONSGML+COMPARL+PE-584.262+01+DOC+PDF+V0//EN&language=EN>.

“increases EU dependence on Russia’s gas monopoly, reduces competition”¹³⁵. Reduced competition was also used as an argument by Urmas Paet (Estonia, ALDE) who referred to the decision by the Polish Office of Competition and Consumer Protection, which “has decided to exclude partners from purchasing stakes in other Nord Stream Pipelines”¹³⁶. Polish authorities have since opened an official investigation into whether Gazprom and the European investors of NS2 have breached anti-monopoly laws.¹³⁷ This is a prime example of how the mistrust between Poland and Russia is reflected on NS2.

In the economic dimension, questions and comments on EU regulation relate precisely to the fact that NS2 – that is, Gazprom – must comply with competition rules.¹³⁸ Questions of Russia and Russian companies’ compliance with EU regulation have been a concern throughout the period analysed, as the first mention is found in a 2012 document by the Council.¹³⁹ Compliance with competition rules is also present in some of the first Commission documents which explicitly mention NS2.¹⁴⁰ This is similar to some of the environmental arguments against NS2 that expressed scepticism of Gazprom complying with the EU’s environmental regulation. The arguments related to EU regulation will be more closely presented in the next chapter.

The dominant supplier argument is used by, for example, Tomasz Piotr Poręba (Poland, ECR), who in a 2016 Parliamentary question stated that NS2 is against the goal of diversification as it strengthens the position of a dominant supplier.¹⁴¹ In a

¹³⁵ Vaidere, Inese (2015 Dec 15), “Compatibility of Nord Stream 2 gas pipeline with the European Energy Union”, P-015778/2015. http://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/P-8-2015-015778_EN.pdf.

¹³⁶ Paet, Urmas (2016 Jul 12), “Building of the Nord Stream 2 gas pipeline”, E-005643/2016. http://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/E-8-2016-005643_EN.pdf.

¹³⁷ “Poland’s anti-monopoly office Opens proceedings against Nord Stream 2.” *Reuters*, 9 May 2018. Available at: <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-gazprom-poland/polands-anti-monopoly-office-opens-proceedings-against-nord-stream-2-idUSKBN1A1FC>.

¹³⁸ E.g Czesak, Edward (2016 Jan 12), “Commission’s stance on Nord Stream 2”, E-000193/2016. http://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/E-8-2016-000193_EN.pdf; Wiśniewska, Jadwiga (2018 May 23).

¹³⁹ Council of the European Union (2012 Dec 3), “Relations with Russia: Key outstanding issues for the EU in its relations with Russia”, ST 17083 2012 INIT, Brussels. Available at: <https://data.consilium.europa.eu/doc/document/ST-17083-2012-INIT/en/pdf>.

¹⁴⁰ European Commission, 2015 Nov 19.

¹⁴¹ Poręba, Tomasz Piotr (2016 Jun 3), “Nord Stream 2”, E-004644/2016. Available at: http://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/E-8-2016-004644_EN.pdf.

later question MEP Poreba also raised concern with the Commission draft decision allowing Gazprom to increase its usage of the OPAL pipeline, the onshore extension of NS, from 50 percent to 80 percent, quoting the same issues of strengthened monopoly position on the German market, as well as the bypassing of Yamal (Poland) and Brotherhood (Ukraine) pipelines.¹⁴² This is similar to the position adopted by ITRE, which in a 2016 report underlined that “a doubling of the capacity of the Nord Stream pipeline would give one company a dominant position on the European gas market, which should be avoided”¹⁴³. The dominant supplier argument is the economic counterpart to the diversification argument, covered by the final chapter in the context of EU strategy and other political arguments.

In addition to arguments related to efficient markets, the analysis revealed multiple documents that discussed the impact NS2 would have on LNG infrastructure. This angle was prominent in debates relating to the EU’s strategy for liquefied natural gas, formulated by ITRE. This report states that if NS2 were built, “contrary to European interests”, an assessment on the accessibility of LNG terminals would be required.¹⁴⁴ In an amendment suggestion to AFET’s opinion on this report, Petras Auštrevičius (Lithuania, ALDE) argues that NS2 would “affect negatively the economic sustainability and efficiency of existing and future LNG terminals”¹⁴⁵. AFET accepted and included this amendment in the same form to its final opinion.¹⁴⁶ There is some support in existing research for this argument; for instance, Loskot-Strachota argues that NS2 might limit LNG demand, discourage further investment and as a result hinder the diversification of supply sources.¹⁴⁷

¹⁴² Poreba, Tomasz Piotr (2016 Oct 31), “OPAL pipeline capacity made available to Gazprom”, E-008210/2016. http://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/E-8-2016-008210_EN.pdf.

¹⁴³ ITRE, 2016 Sep 29.

¹⁴⁴ ITRE, 2016 Sep 29, p. 9.

¹⁴⁵ Committee on Foreign Affairs (AFET) (2016 Jun 2), “Amendments 1-52 – Draft Opinion on an EU strategy for liquefied natural gas and gas storage”, PE 583.931v01-00, p. 24. Available at: <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?pubRef=-//EP//NONSGML+COMPARL+PE-583.931+01+DOC+PDF+V0//EN&language=EN>.

¹⁴⁶ Committee on Foreign Affairs (AFET) (2016 Jul 14), “Opinion on an EU strategy for liquefied natural gas and gas storage”, PE 582.256v03-00. Available at: <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?pubRef=-//EP//NONSGML+COMPARL+PE-582.256+03+DOC+PDF+V0//EN&language=EN>.

¹⁴⁷ Loskot-Strachota, 2016.

The economic arguments highlight an interesting trend in the documents, namely that only a few of them provide any evidence for the stated opinion. As discussed in the methodology section, this is especially true for parliamentary questions and amendment suggestions. Although this is apparent in many documents, one of the best examples is the parliamentary question presented by Monika Flašíková-Beňová (Slovakia, S&D), who states that “Russian gas transported through Nord Stream 2 could be many times more expensive to the end user than gas transported through the Ukrainian pipeline” without any reference to possible reasons why this could be.¹⁴⁸ This line of argument, with no justifications provided, leads to a rather fruitless line of discussion: the Commission’s response simply stated that increased interconnectivity and diversification of the European gas market will lead to more competitive prices with no reference to NS2 itself.¹⁴⁹ It is, however, noteworthy that the Commission later changed its stance on this and has subsequently adopted the view that NS2 will cause price increases to some countries and is thus unacceptable.¹⁵⁰

As is obvious from the discussion of the economic arguments against the pipeline project, the opponents of NS2 have mostly framed the debate in relation to Gazprom’s market position and historical issues rather than the direct economic impact that increased Russian natural gas imports to Europe might have. Although raised in a 2017 ITRE plenary sitting by the Commission representative Klaus-Dieter Borchardt,¹⁵¹ the possible price increases to some member states as well as European countries outside the union have not been a prominent topic of discussion. Rather, problems regarding NS2 have been framed to fit the narrative of a liberal market economy with efficient, fair markets.

Many of these arguments of course have a strong political dimension and are not purely economic. Thus, the next chapter turns to the political arguments presented in the debate on NS2. The concluding chapter will pull together the analysis of all

¹⁴⁸ Flašíková-Beňová, Monika (2016 Feb 29), “Nord Stream 2 gas pipeline project”, E-001744/2016. http://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/E-8-2016-001744_EN.pdf.

¹⁴⁹ Cañete, Arias (2017 Sep 4 a), “Answer on behalf of the Commission”, E-001744/2016(ASW). Available at: http://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/E-8-2016-001744-ASW_EN.html.

¹⁵⁰ Committee on Industry, Research and Energy (ITRE) (2017 Oct 11), “Committee meeting”, *European Parliament TV*, ITRE/8/11151 2017. Available at: <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/ep-live/en/committees/video?event=20171011-1430-COMMITTEE-ITRE>.

¹⁵¹ ITRE, 2017 Oct 11.

three dimensions and explore the interconnectedness of the environmental, economic and political arguments.

5. Political arguments

Whether or not NS2 is a political project or purely business has been one of the most visible topics in public discussion. This chapter looks at how the NS2 is framed in the political dimension and analyses arguments related to the commerce-politics axis as well as broader policies and policy-making of the EU. The main argument advanced is that the political dimension has dominated the debate – indeed, almost each one of the analysed 81 documents explicitly mentioning NS2 included an argument that could be placed into the political dimension. This chapter also offers further support to the argument that the division within the EU on NS2 is smaller than would commonly appear, with a large majority of the arguments opposing the pipeline.

This thesis distinguishes between two types of political arguments presented in the debate: internally and externally oriented ones. The “internal” political arguments are those that relate to factors such as EU’s core values; EU regulation, legislation and strategy; and the goals expressed in strategy and policy documents. The “external” dimension of political arguments represents arguments that focus on actors and issues outside the EU. External arguments relate to, for instance, Ukraine, the wider eastern neighbourhood, and Russia from a foreign policy perspective. As with the other argument classifications, these groups are non-exclusive and there is considerable overlap between them. This chapter shows that most arguments presented in the political dimension are internally oriented and relate to the aims of EU policies: solidarity, diversification, and energy security.

It is important to note that both proponents and opponents of NS2 tend to list multiple different arguments relating to the political sphere. In other words, many actors consider the different political arguments to be complements. Furthermore, as mentioned in the previous chapter, political arguments are closely intertwined with the economic arguments. Indeed, their separation is often difficult and not always purposeful.

This chapter is divided into three subsections. The first and second part discuss the internal and external arguments, respectively, while the third section explores the

connections between these two dimensions and takes note of some of the most important and interesting results of the discussion.

5.1. *Solidarity and diversification in EU strategy (internally oriented arguments)*

As presented in chapter 2, the EU highlights security, solidarity and trust as one of the five dimensions on which the Energy Union will be built on. Secure gas supplies and the diversification of gas supply sources as well as routes are presented as goals of the union.¹⁵² Furthermore, the Commission highlights that “[s]olidarity and regional cooperation, as well as speaking with one voice internationally when dealing with supplier countries, are key to this [resilient energy system]”¹⁵³, as the EESS presented in chapter 2 also emphasises. Security of Gas Supply Regulation was adopted in 2017 in order to increase the protection the EU had against gas supply disruptions. The Regulation further emphasised regional cooperation and the pooling of resources. Diversification of gas supplies is explicitly stated to mean the promotion of increased access to the global LNG market and promotion of the Southern Gas Corridor¹⁵⁴, which would diversify “supplies by bringing in gas from the Caspian countries, the Mediterranean and the Black Sea”¹⁵⁵.

In line with the analysis of the previous two dimensions, only a few of the analysed documents expressed positive views about the NS2. However, it is noteworthy that the majority of arguments in favour of NS2 are in the political group, as this suggests that the proponents found it most beneficial to frame NS2 in the political dimension or, perhaps that responding to the criticism presented in the political framework has been perceived as the most crucial one to address. This is highly interesting, as the general perception is that those who support the project mainly lean on

¹⁵² European Commission, n.d. a.

¹⁵³ European Commission, n.d. a.

¹⁵⁴ The Southern Gas Corridor is a gas pipeline network which would bring in natural gas from Azerbaijan’s Shah Deniz gas field. The project, promoted by the Commission, has been widely criticised, among other things, for supporting the authoritarian Azerbaijani regime as well as for being too ambitious and expensive (stranded asset concerns). See e.g. Siddi, Marco (2017b), “The Southern Gas Corridor – challenges to a geopolitical approach in the EU’s external energy policy”, *FIIA Briefing Paper 216*. Available at: <https://www.fiaa.fi/en/publication/the-southern-gas-corridor>; Bankwatch Network (n.d.), “Southern Gas Corridor”. Available at: <https://bankwatch.org/project/southern-gas-corridor-euro-caspian-mega-pipeline>.

¹⁵⁵ European Commission, n.d. a.

economic and emissions-related arguments. The reason for this counterintuitive result is at least partly the logic of classification used in this thesis: even those arguments which, for instance, are against the “politicisation” of the pipeline are classified as political, as this is the dimension to which they most closely relate. Indeed, the political arguments presented in favour of NS2 can be divided into two groups: those that discuss the politicisation or ideologisation of NS2 or trade with Russia in general, and those that refer to TEP and other EU regulation.

Before continuing to the analysis of the specific arguments, it is worth noting that all of the internally oriented arguments in favour of NS2 were made by German or French representatives. This is not surprising since the fact that most active proponents of NS2 are from the investor countries is well noted in previous literature. As discussed in chapter 3, it is indeed unclear whether it is the EU or Germany who needs the new pipeline: due to the closures of nuclear plants and emission reduction commitments pushing out coal, Germany is expecting a surge in natural gas demand. Thus, it is not surprising it is German MEPs that lend their support to the project. This supports the common perception, as outlined by Stewart, that Germany has tended to “focus on national interests in the economic and energy fields, whereas in other areas the broader EU context is more likely to be taken into account”¹⁵⁶. However, it is worthy to note that there is also opposition from German MEPs, as will be discussed in the third part of this chapter. Finally, it is noteworthy that no arguments were found by Dutch or Austrian representatives, although both countries have supported Germany in the Council. Thus, the fact that NS2 is a more “European” project than NS1 is not strongly reflected in the debate.¹⁵⁷

It is clear that support for NS2 and opposition to EU’s regulatory power concerning the project has become almost synonymous with Germany. By the end of 2018 – which is the end of the time period under analysis in this thesis – the German government had not withdrawn its support from the project despite both internal (from German politicians) and external (from other Member States and the US)

¹⁵⁶ Stewart, 2013, p.13.

¹⁵⁷ Gazprom and German investor companies financed 82% of NS1, while for NS2 this figure is 70%. Nord Stream (2019), “Our shareholders”. Available at: <https://www.nord-stream.com/about-us/our-shareholders/>; NS2 AG, 2019b.

pressures.¹⁵⁸ NS2 clearly highlights the complex dynamics between Member States and EU institutions – although all three major EU bodies had by the end of 2018 expressed concerns about the project, it still had the support of the largest countries, France and Germany, as well as a handful of other Member States. Thus, no majority in the Council has been reached to pass new legislation which both the Parliament and the Commission have supported.¹⁵⁹

The first group of internal political arguments, as already stated above, contains those statements that refer to the politicisation of the issue or its ideological underpinnings. Markus Ferber (Germany, EPP), for instance, argues in a question presented to the Commission that the Commission's job is to promote legal certainty. His question implies that introducing new regulation due to NS2 would be counter to the Commission's tasks and that political opinions should not have room in that process.¹⁶⁰ Political opinions can quite clearly here be seen to relate to the role of Russia in the European energy environment. Along similar lines, while advocating support for regions with a low level of diversification of energy sources, Jean-Luc Schaffhauser (France, ENF) highlights in an amendment suggestion that "energy policy should be implemented in a pragmatic, non-ideologically motivated manner in respect of long-established suppliers such as Russia"¹⁶¹.

Perhaps the strongest stance is taken by Knut Fleckenstein (Germany, S&D), who in a question to the Commission calls for action to prevent the further escalation of the politicisation of trade with Russia.¹⁶² He argues that the requested mandate from the Council to negotiate "special rules for Nord Stream 2" is just this. MEP Fleckenstein also questions why the Commission facilitates the politicization of NS2 by allowing US interference through sanctions imposed on European firms. The

¹⁵⁸ "Germany to back Nord Stream 2 despite Ukraine tensions", *Euractiv*, 4 Dec 2018. Available at: <https://www.euractiv.com/section/energy/news/germany-to-back-nord-stream-2-despite-ukraine-tensions/>.

¹⁵⁹ Meier et al., 2019.

¹⁶⁰ Ferber, Markus (2017 Oct 22), "Ensuring that the rule of law governs approval procedures in the case of the Nord Stream 2 project", E-001940/2017. http://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/E-8-2017-001940_EN.pdf.

¹⁶¹ AFET, 2016 Jun 2, p.21.

¹⁶² Fleckenstein, Knut (2017 Jun 19), "Politicisation of major European energy projects such as Nord Stream 2", E-004024/2017. http://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/E-8-2017-004024_EN.pdf.

Commission's response reiterated the stance that NS2 cannot operate in a legal void or under third country regulation.¹⁶³

MEP Fleckenstein's argument also relates to the second group of internally oriented political arguments supporting NS2: those that refer to EU regulation and, more specifically, the Third Energy Package (TEP). Here a few actors have pointed to the mandate the Commission requested from the Council to negotiate on the project directly with Russia on behalf of all the Member States. This mandate was requested on the premise that since TEP was found to not apply to NS2 in 2016 by the Commission's legal service, NS2 would operate in a legislative void.¹⁶⁴ In a question to the Commission, presented in mid-2017, Jens Gieseke (Germany, EPP) however argued, referring to a decision by the German Federal Network Agency, that any additional legislation regarding the project would be discriminatory.¹⁶⁵ Hermann Winkler and Joachim Zeller (Germany, EPP) also argue it is "crystal clear" there is no legislative void and ask how the Council will ensure the mandate does not amount to discrimination against NS2¹⁶⁶. This stance was repeated a few months later in a question to the Commission in which they asked "[h]ow will the Commission ensure that the proposed legislation does not unlawfully discriminate against Nord Stream 2?"¹⁶⁷ Defending its own position, the Commission in its response noted that the legislation does not distinguish between individual countries or pipelines and cannot thus be argued to amount to discrimination.¹⁶⁸

Furthermore, an amendment suggestion to an ITRE report by MEPs Schaffhauser and Nicolas Bay (France, ENF) highlights how the issue of NS2 focuses on certain Member States specifically. This is apparent in the arguments against NS2, where

¹⁶³ Cañete, Arias (2017 Sep 4 b), "Answer on behalf of the Commission", E-004024/2017(ASW). Available at: http://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/E-8-2017-004024-ASW_EN.html.

¹⁶⁴ Gieseke, Jens (2017 Jun 14), "Possible negotiations with Russia on Nord Stream 2", E-003946/2017. Available at: http://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/E-8-2017-003946_EN.pdf.

¹⁶⁵ Gieseke, 2017 Jun 14.

¹⁶⁶ Winkler, Hermann & Zeller, Joachim (2017 Jul 5), "Legal framework conditions for Nord Stream 2 and similar gas pipelines", E-004577/2017. Available at: http://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/E-8-2017-004577_EN.pdf.

¹⁶⁷ Winkler, Hermann & Zeller, Joachim (2017 Nov 21), "Compliance with 'better regulation' standards by the European Commission", P-007147/2017. Available at: http://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/P-8-2017-007147_EN.pdf.

¹⁶⁸ Cañete, Arias (2018 Jan 5), "Answer on behalf of the Commission", P-007147/2017(ASW). Available at: http://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/P-8-2017-007147-ASW_EN.html.

especially the role of Germany repeatedly comes up. However, it is interesting that Germany's role also comes up in a document supporting NS2. This suggested amendment states that

“[The Commission]...highlights that the project is directly in line with the underlying principles of the Energy Union, as it is the result of the desire of private monopoly stakeholders and, therefore, is the result of EU legislation, of Germany's desire to achieve hegemony and monopolise this liberalised internal market, and of Poland's policy of non-cooperation towards the Russian gas stakeholders in the Yamal-Europe 2 gas pipeline construction project;”¹⁶⁹

As ENF is a Eurosceptic group this stance is not as surprising, and one can with reasonable confidence say that MEPs Schaffhauser and Bay did not expect this amendment to go through to the final ITRE report.¹⁷⁰ Instead, this comment underlines the usefulness of amendment documents – in all of their complexity – as sources for analysing divisions within the EU, as MEPs use them as an opportunity to convey their opinions. What this quote highlights is the perception that Member States tend to drive their own agendas. It is also a clear criticism of Germany's dominant role in the union.

Essentially, MEPs Schaffhauser and Bay imply there is a lack of solidarity within the EU. This is one of the most common internally oriented political arguments presented against NS2, alongside diversification and appeals to EU regulation. These three main arguments against NS2 shall be discussed next. Furthermore, the strategic goal of security of supply is discussed in relation to each of these three arguments, but especially diversification and regulation, as these are the tools with which supply security is argued to be achieved.

Solidarity

Appeals to solidarity are visible in many types of documents, from ITRE reports to parliamentary questions. The core of the argument is that NS2 undermines

¹⁶⁹ ITRE, 2016 Jun 16, pp. 84-85.

¹⁷⁰ As both MEPs have shown support to NS2 earlier, this comment is not assessed to be only a criticism of the EU.

solidarity by prioritising economic relations between Germany and Russia, not energy security of other Member States or indeed the Union as a whole.¹⁷¹ In May 2016, an ITRE draft report on a Motion for a European Parliament Resolution expressed concern about NS2 due to the effects it would have “on energy security and diversification of supply sources and the principle of solidarity among Member States”¹⁷². As is clear, this statement also outlines other common internally directed political arguments against NS2, diversification and energy security, and is thus an excellent example of their interconnectedness. AFET’s opinion on the same topic includes similar arguments, for instance by noting that NS2 “will go against the principle of solidarity and trust among Member States, [and] undermine efforts up-to-date of diversification of supply sources”¹⁷³.

Appealing to solidarity is an interesting argument because solidarity is one of the core principles of the EU – indeed, one can find it mentioned in most official EU policy documents, like the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union, mentioned in chapter 2. For instance, the 2015 Energy Union Package by the Council sees the Energy Union “based on true solidarity and trust”¹⁷⁴. This is further echoed in the First State of the Energy Union report some half a year later which even has a subheading “Energy security, solidarity and trust” to discuss the interconnectedness of the three, within the EU but also in the broader neighbourhood.¹⁷⁵ However, David et al. argue solidarity within the EU is difficult to achieve because of the different experiences with Russia.¹⁷⁶ Thus even though solidarity is a key value of the EU, the term is open for interpretation, which is likely to cause tensions between Member States with different perceptions of Russia. Nevertheless, the popularity of solidarity is at least partially due to the fact that it is one of the core principles of the

¹⁷¹ See e.g. Wiśniewska, 2018 May 23.

¹⁷² Committee on Industry, Research and Energy (ITRE) (2016 May 10), “Draft Report on EU strategy for liquefied natural gas and as storage (2016/2059(INI))”, PE 582.327v01-00, p. 5. Available at: <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?pubRef=-//EP//NONSGML+COMPARL+PE-582.327+01+DOC+PDF+V0//EN&language=EN>.

¹⁷³ AFET, 2016 Jul 14.

¹⁷⁴ Council of the European Union (2015 Feb 26), “Energy Union Package: A framework strategy for a resilient energy union with a forward-looking climate change policy”, ST 6594 2015 INIT, Brussels, p.2. Available at: <https://data.consilium.europa.eu/doc/document/ST-6594-2015-INIT/en/pdf>.

¹⁷⁵ Council of the European Union, 2015 Nov 19.

¹⁷⁶ David et al. (eds.), 2013.

EU, as this makes it an argument that is easy to justify with existing adopted policy. For instance, MEP Fotyga suggested that the EU should be able to block projects “that go against the European solidarity and are not compatible with III Energy Package [TEP] or which increase EU Member States’ or the Eastern Partners’ dependency”, specifically naming NS2.¹⁷⁷

Solidarity makes an interesting argument also because there is a clear difference in how it is used in different documents. Many official documents and amendment suggestions do not explicitly explain what is meant by solidarity. It is not specified, for instance, how NS2 undermines solidarity, or who needs to show solidarity to whom. On the contrary, many of the parliamentary questions discuss solidarity in a more concrete manner, again highlighting the usefulness of this type of resource for the analysis. For instance, in a 2015 question directed to the Council, a group of ECR MEPs stated that NS2 undermines solidarity in energy policy and requested the union shows solidarity towards Member States of Central and Eastern Europe “whose investments are under threat”¹⁷⁸. In a question to the Commission, András Gyürk (Hungary, EPP) asked how the Commission will compensate those central and eastern Members who will see price increases due to NS2¹⁷⁹ – although no justification for the assumption of price increases is given. These arguments also highlight the connection between solidarity and the economic dimension, which shall be returned to at the end of this chapter.

Moreover, parliamentary questions appealing to solidarity are interesting due to their variety. Although reminders of solidarity as a core principle of the EU and calls for more solidarity between what might be called the old and the new members of the Union are the most common arguments, they are not the only ones. For instance, MEP Fotyga, in a question to the Commission, states that there is an “influential group of officials putting the interests of German and Austrian energy companies

¹⁷⁷ AFET, 2017 Sep 19, p.61.

¹⁷⁸ Ożóg, Stanisław, Wiśniewska, Jadwiga, Wojciechowski, Janusz & Kuźmiuk, Zbigniew (2015 Oct 2), “Threats for Central and Eastern European countries arising from the signature of an agreement on the construction of the Nord Stream 2 pipeline in Vladivostok”, P-013463/2015. Available at: http://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/P-8-2015-013463_EN.pdf.

¹⁷⁹ András Gyürk (2016 Dec 7), “Security of gas supply to Europe”, E-009261/2016. Available at: http://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/E-8-2016-009261_EN.pdf.

and Gazprom above common interests and solidarity”¹⁸⁰, thus referring more to individual actors than states themselves.

Diversification

As mentioned in the introduction to this chapter, political and economic arguments are closely interconnected. This is especially true for the diversification argument which relates to the EU’s energy strategy and is the political side of the “dominant supplier” argument presented in the previous chapter. The reasoning behind separating these two arguments into different groups relates to their contextualisation: while the dominant supplier argument was mostly framed within the “liberal, efficient market” context, the diversification argument, as it is discussed here, is framed within the EU’s strategy and regulation, thus making it a more politically oriented argument.

Diversification is an argument that appears even more often than appeals to solidarity in the debate on NS2. Diversification is similar to solidarity in that it is a core principle of EESS: one of the eight pillars on which the strategy is built on is “diversifying external supplies and related infrastructure”¹⁸¹. As is clear from the citations presented earlier, it is often bundled together with solidarity and especially energy security, which diversification is perceived to guarantee or at least help to achieve. Diversification should thus actually be understood as a tool, not a goal in itself. Nevertheless, because it is presented as an aim of the EESS, it makes a natural and easy justification for arguments against NS2.

Diversification, however, is also very different from solidarity as an argument because it is more tangible and less value based. NS2 has been estimated to increase Germany’s reliance on Russian gas to 80 percent of its total natural gas consumption.¹⁸² This makes it easy for those opposing the pipeline to argue in a

¹⁸⁰ Fotyga, Anna Elżbieta (2017 Jul 25), “Do new US sanctions against Russia have a real chance of halting the anti-European Nord Stream 2 project?”, E-005078/2017. Available at: http://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/E-8-2017-005078_EN.pdf.

¹⁸¹ European Commission, 2015 Nov 19, p.1.

¹⁸² “Joint open letter regarding Nord Stream 2 to German Chancellor Angela Merkel” (2018 Nov 6). Available at: <https://rebecca-harms.de/post/joint-open-letter-regarding-nord-stream-2-to-german-chancellor-angela-merkel-57995>.

concrete manner that NS2 goes directly against the adopted energy strategy. Thus, those arguing that NS2 goes against the goal of diversification also point to how the project conflicts with EU strategy and regulation more generally by running “contrary to the underlying principles of a fully integrated, secure, competitive and sustainable Energy Union”¹⁸³ and by being incompatible with TEP¹⁸⁴. The obvious question – and indeed the one asked by those in favour of NS2 – is whether the EU has the power to try and stop projects that go against its strategies. For instance, in 2017 the Commission’s stance was that this was outside its mandate, as presented earlier. This question is nevertheless still at the heart of the debate on the Commission’s mandate to negotiate on NS2 on behalf of all Member States. Those in favour of the pipeline believe the Commission should not be able to do so. This same question applies to new legislation introduced, which is perceived to “target” NS2 as shown earlier in this chapter.

Because it is a core principle of European energy policy, diversification is present in one form or another in the documents analysed from early on. For instance, in a Commission Staff Working Document relating to an in-depth study of European energy security it is stated that “[t]he key measure [to achieve energy security] in the medium term is the development of infrastructure granting priority to projects that allow higher diversification of suppliers of each of the Member States”¹⁸⁵. The Energy Union Package highlights the importance of diversification in the changed European environment, stating that “[t]he political challenges over the last months have shown that diversification of energy sources, suppliers and routes is crucial for ensuring secure and resilient energy supplies”¹⁸⁶. In similar vein, the First State of the Energy Union Report expresses concerns about the project specifically because it “would not give access to a new source of supply and would further increase

¹⁸³ ITRE, 2016 May 10, p.5.

¹⁸⁴ AFET, 2016 Jun 2, p.24.

¹⁸⁵ Council of the European Union (2014 Jun 2), “Commission Staff Working Document - In-depth study of European Energy Security”, Accompanying the document “Communication from the Commission to the Council and the European Parliament - European Energy Security Strategy”, ST 10409 2014 ADD 4, Brussels, p.117. Available at: <https://data.consilium.europa.eu/doc/document/ST-10409-2014-ADD-4/en/pdf>.

¹⁸⁶ Council of the European Union, 2015 Feb 26, p.4.

transmission capacity from Russia to the EU”¹⁸⁷. The state of the EU-Russian relationship is thus undoubtedly crucial.

Related to NS2, calls for prioritising diversification are apparent in a variety of documents.¹⁸⁸ In parliamentary questions, diversification is explicitly mentioned in relation to NS2 from 2015 by, for instance, MEPs Fotyga, Paet, Gyürk, Vaidere, and Adam Szejnfeld (EPP, Poland).¹⁸⁹ Diversification is brought up consistently in parliamentary questions in 2016, 2017 and 2018 as well, although less than in 2015.¹⁹⁰ Diversification is mentioned especially in relation to the eastern Member States, some of which rely 100 percent on Russia for their gas demand, as highlighted, for instance, in the EESS.

Parliamentary questions presented challenge the Commission quite directly. For instance, MEP Poręba asks whether the Commission upholds its own opinion that “Nord Stream 2 does not help to increase security or diversification and thus cannot count on EU support”¹⁹¹. Flašíková-Beňová in turn states that “the Nord Stream 2 project will be clear proof of the failure of one of the key objectives of the Energy Union — diversification”¹⁹².

¹⁸⁷ Council of the European Union, 2015 Nov 19, p.10.

¹⁸⁸ See e.g. Gyürk, András (2015 Sep 30), “Compliance of energy contracts with EU law”, P-013363/2015. Available at: http://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/P-8-2015-013363_EN.pdf; Petras Auštrevičius in AFET, 2016 Jun 2, p. 24; and multiple amendments in AFET, 2017 Sep 19.

¹⁸⁹ Fotyga, Anna Elżbieta (2015 Jun 25), “New lines for the Nord Stream gas pipeline”, P-010326/2015. Available at: http://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/P-8-2015-010326_EN.pdf; Szejnfeld, Adam (2015 Sep 10), “EU energy security and Nord Stream 2”, P-012711/2015. Available at: http://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/P-8-2015-012711_EN.pdf; Paet, Urmas (2015 Sep 17) “Diversification of the European Union's energy supply sources, and Gazprom agreement”, E-012869/2015. Available at: http://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/E-8-2015-012869_EN.pdf; Gyürk, 2015 Sep 30; or Vaidere, 2015 Dec 15.

¹⁹⁰ See e.g. Czesak, Edward & Krasnodębski, Zdzisław (2016 Nov 17), “Commission decision on the OPAL pipeline”, P-008639/2016. Available at: http://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/P-8-2016-008639_EN.pdf; Kofod, Jeppe (2017 Mar 27), “Rejection of Nord Stream 2 project on grounds of European security”, P-002042/2017. Available at: http://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/P-8-2017-002042_EN.pdf; and Pospíšil, Jiří (2018 Jul 20), “The EU’s position on the Nord Stream 2 gas pipeline”, E-004084/2018. Available at: http://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/E-8-2018-004084_EN.pdf.

¹⁹¹ Poręba, Tomasz Piotr (2016 May 20), “Nord Stream 2”, E-004094/2016. Available at: http://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/E-8-2016-004094_EN.pdf.

¹⁹² Flašíková-Beňová, 2016 Feb 29.

An interesting feature of the diversification argument is that in the analysed documents there is no similar commentary regarding imports from Norway, which in 2017 amounted to 37,7 percent of all natural gas imports, only 0,8 percentage points less than imports from Russia, as shown in **graph 1 on page XX**. The most plausible reason for this is the very different kind of relationship the EU has with Norway compared to that it has with Russia. Norway, unlike Russia, is unconditionally understood to be a part of Europe and although it has remained outside the EU, it is an EEA member with access to the single market. Furthermore, as stated by Commission representative Klaus-Dieter Borchardt in an ITRE plenary session in 2017, as Norwegian imports are regulated by bilateral agreements between Norway and the destination country like Germany, there is no similar legislative void as perceived with NS2.¹⁹³ The final main internally oriented argument accordingly relates to legislation and compliance with EU regulation.

Regulation and strategy

Arguments appealing to the EU's regulation and strategy are overarching in the sense that they provide the framework for arguments appealing to solidarity and diversification, too. Thus, many documents appealing to solidarity and diversification also highlight that NS2 is against the general energy strategy of the EU.¹⁹⁴ This is true for energy security as well, which can reasonably be argued to be the most important goal of the EU's energy policy currently, as stated in chapter 2. Thus, in addition to solidarity and diversification, many actors argue that NS2 goes against "the underlying principles of a fully integrated, secure, competitive and sustainable Energy Union"¹⁹⁵.

As presented in the section discussing arguments supporting NS2, the plans for new gas market legislation have been met with some criticism and accusations of it being

¹⁹³ ITRE, 2017 Oct 11.

¹⁹⁴ See e.g. ITRE, 2016 May 10; AFET, 2016 Jun 2; AFET, 2016 Jun 15; ITRE, 2016 Jun 16; ITRE, 2016 Sep 29; and Council of the European Union (2017 Feb 27), "Outcome of the Council meeting: 3521st Council meeting - Transport, Telecommunications and Energy", ST 6719 2017 INIT, Brussels. Available at: <https://data.consilium.europa.eu/doc/document/ST-6719-2017-INIT/en/pdf>.

¹⁹⁵ ITRE, 2016 Sep 29; AFET, 2016 Jul 14.

discriminatory against NS2 specifically. It is clear that although the new Common rules for gas pipelines entering the EU internal market would apply to all pipelines, it has been motivated by concerns related to NS2. The Commission adopted the legislative proposal in late 2017. However, by the end of 2018, the agreed text was not yet formally approved by the Parliament and the Council.¹⁹⁶ The core of the new legislation is to “apply EU internal gas market rules up to the border of the EU” and would require Member States to “cooperate with third countries to ensure full compliance with EU rules”¹⁹⁷. As discussed, Germany has refused to agree bilaterally with Russia on regulatory questions regarding NS2, which this new legislation would now force Germany to do. By contrast, Poland has for long been an advocate of applying the same binding EU regulation to both domestic companies as well as gas suppliers from outside the EU,¹⁹⁸ and MEP Fotyga’s and MEP Poręba’s arguments presented earlier in this thesis mirror well Poland’s general approach to gas market regulation.

As already mentioned, official EU documents like reports by the major EU institutions, especially the Commission and the Council, for most of the time period under analysis only express concern and demand compliance with regulation. They also do not specify how oversight can be performed or what happens in case of non-compliance. However, more recently, the stances expressed have become much more critical. Of particular interest here is the evolution of the Commission’s position on NS2. The Commission – while underlining NS2 needs to comply with EU regulation – took a fairly benign approach to the pipeline in the beginning:

“The Commission considers Nord Stream 2 a **commercial project** and it will be for commercial parties to decide which infrastructure is viable for them. However, as with any other pipeline in the EU, this pipeline will have to fully respect EU law, in particular the Third Energy Package, as well as environmental, competition and public procurement rules.”¹⁹⁹
[emphasis added]

¹⁹⁶ See chapter 2 for a brief overview of the developments in 2019.

¹⁹⁷ European Parliament (2019), “Common rules for gas pipelines entering the EU internal market”, *Briefing – EU legislation in process*. Available at: [http://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/BRIE/2018/614673/EPRS_BRI\(2018\)614673_EN.pdf](http://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/BRIE/2018/614673/EPRS_BRI(2018)614673_EN.pdf).

¹⁹⁸ Cichocki, 2013.

¹⁹⁹ European Commission, 2015 Nov 19, p.6.

While the Commission was clearly wary of the project from the beginning, stating that “[i]f constructed, Nord Stream 2 would – according to the Commission's estimates – increase excess transmission capacity from Russia even further”²⁰⁰, it nevertheless took a less critical stance than many MEPs, for instance. Furthermore, the Commission has recognised the limits of its power, stating that it “is not in a position to prohibit the construction of individual infrastructure projects that comply with applicable Union law”²⁰¹. However, the Commission's stance has changed considerably and has led it to not only publicly oppose the construction of NS2, but also to propose new legislation. The main reasoning has been that the requirements laid out by the Commission from the beginning – specifically, the application of TEP – are not being fulfilled and thus the project cannot be supported. The Commission's stance has thus transformed from viewing it as a commercial project, to “expressing concern”, to requesting a mandate for negotiations with Russia and proposing a legislative proposal on new gas pipeline regulation.

The tension here is that despite the Parliament and the Commission openly oppose the construction of NS2, it does not mean the EU has the power to stop the project from happening. As established in existing literature, while the Commission is an internally strong actor in the energy sector, with strong policy tools at its disposal, it is a weak external actor. It suffers constantly from a lack of competence, and it does not have a strong mandate in the heterogeneous EU, where Member States have different interests and there are no coherent policy goals.²⁰² Moreover, the Commission and the Parliament alone are unable to impose new energy market regulations, as explained in the second chapter: the Parliament and the Council must both approve new legislation through the process of ordinary legislative procedure.

Here it is crucial to reiterate that discourse does not equal action, as is apparent from the case of the Council, which has expressed criticism of NS2 but still failed to pass new gas legislation that would affect the project. Nevertheless, as stated in the first

²⁰⁰ European Commission, 2015 Nov 19, p.6.

²⁰¹ Cañete, Arias (2018 Sep 24), “Answer on behalf of the Commission”, E-003988/2018(ASW). Available at: http://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/E-8-2018-003988-ASW_EN.html.

²⁰² See e.g. Kuzemko, Caroline & Hadfield, Amelia (2016), “Defining and projecting EU energy policy”, ch. 1, pp.21-50 in Godzimirski, Jakub M. (ed.) (2016), *EU Leadership in Energy and Environmental Governance*, Palgrave Macmillan: London; or Andersen, Svein S., Goldthau, Andreas & Sitter, Nick (eds.) (2017), *Energy Union – Europe's New Liberal Mercantilism?*, Palgrave Macmillan: London.

chapter, discourse is important even if it is only on the level of rhetoric, as any public discourse will affect political decision making in the future. Thus, the Council's stance against NS2 should not be completely discounted.

5.2. *Natural gas as a foreign policy tool (externally oriented arguments)*

The analysed documents revealed two types of externally oriented political arguments supporting NS2. The first type is closely linked to the ideologization or politicization of debate and policy-making, as this is often seen to refer to Russia. MEP Schaffhauser's (France, ENF) amendment suggestion presented earlier in this chapter makes this connection to Russia explicit.²⁰³ This can be argued to also closely relate to the securitisation of energy relations, covered in chapter 2.

The second type of externally oriented arguments supporting NS2 relates to the role of Ukraine and the potential unreliability that the gas transit route through Ukraine presents:

“[ITRE] says that ‘Russia can no longer be considered a reliable partner’. There is no reasonable justification for such accusations, as the Russian gas company Gazprom has honoured all its contracts to date.

Surely the problem lies, rather, in repeated non-payment by the Ukrainian gas company Naftogaz? Is the Commission, therefore, willing to put pressure on Ukraine...and Naftogaz to ensure security of supply for the Member States?”²⁰⁴

This argument relates to the 2006 and 2009 gas cut-offs. This question underlines that there is no unanimity within the Parliament that it is Russia who is responsible for lack of energy security in the EU – the implicit argument of those who oppose increased imports from Russia – but the unreliability of transit countries. This naturally links to the different perceptions of Russia that can be found within the EU. Although this specific question does not explicitly relate to NS2, some of its signatories have expressed supporting opinions earlier, for instance, MEPs Bay and

²⁰³ AFET, 2016 Jun 2, p.21.

²⁰⁴ Bay, Nicolas, Schaffhauser, Jean-Luc, Monot, Bernard, Troszczynski, Mylène, Fontana, Lorenzo, Chauprade, Aymeric, Arnautu, Marie-Christine, Obermayr, Franz, de Graaff, Marcel, Maeijer, Vicky, Stuger, Olaf, Gollnisch, Bruno, Lebreton, Gilles, Jalkh, Jean-François & Boutonnet, Marie-Christine (2015 Mar 31), “Unreliability of our partnership with Ukraine”, E-005475/2015. Available at: http://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/E-8-2015-005475_EN.pdf.

Schaffhauser. Furthermore, the expressed support to Russian imports suggests increased imports through NS2 would not be considered problematic. This question is also the only document discovered in this thesis which can be interpreted to support NS2 that has signatories from outside Germany and France; the MEPs represent Austria, France and the Netherlands. As these are all investor countries, this finding supports the existing literature.

However, others see Ukraine's role as a transit country as a priority and something that the EU should continue to support. Multiple documents show that the Parliament and the Council both support Ukraine's role as a transit country. In already the First State of the Energy Union report, published in 2015, the Council stated that "[i]t is in the interest of all parties that Ukraine remains an important transit country"²⁰⁵. This of course again highlights the crucial difference between discourse and action: NS2 is expected to reduce gas transit through Ukraine. The importance of Ukraine fits thus better into the discourse by the Parliament and the Commission. Most recently, in late 2018 the Parliament reiterated "the crucial role of Ukraine in the European energy supply network"²⁰⁶. It is noteworthy that this phrasing in the final report was an amendment suggested by MEP Fotyga who, as established before, has been one of the most consistent and vocal opponents of NS2.²⁰⁷

Ukraine's role in the European gas transmission system is also often linked to appeals to solidarity as well as the iteration that NS2 is a political project without an economic basis. One of the most critical stances was presented by MEP Fotyga as early as mid-2015, when she stated that "Nord Stream is not an economic venture but a political tool that Russia is using to pursue aggressive policies towards its neighbours"²⁰⁸. The statement was made with reference to Putin's announcement that gas transit through Ukraine will end by 2020, and the point was restated later

²⁰⁵ Council of the European Union, 2015 Nov 19, p.10.

²⁰⁶ European Parliament (2018 Nov 16), "Report on the implementation of the EU Association Agreement with Ukraine", PE 622.304v02-00, p.16. Available at: http://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/A-8-2018-0369_EN.pdf?redirect.

²⁰⁷ Committee on Foreign Affairs (2018 Sep 10), "Amendments 1-174 – Draft report on implementation of the EU association agreement with Ukraine", PE 627.676v01-00. Available at: <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?pubRef=-//EP//NONSGML+COMPARL+PE-627.676+01+DOC+PDF+V0//EN&language=EN>.

²⁰⁸ Fotyga, 2015 Jun 25.

when MEP Fotyga remarked that classifying NS2 as an economic undertaking is an obvious lie.²⁰⁹ This reflects not only the general Polish perception of Russia but also the view of the Polish government, which has opposed the project from the beginning. For instance, the Polish Prime Minister Mateusz Morawiecki has called NS2 a “poison pill” and “a weapon of hybrid warfare”²¹⁰. In addition to the political side some MEPs have also pointed to the negative economic consequences that reduced gas transit would entail to Ukraine, highlighting the interconnectedness of economic arguments as well as internal and external political arguments. This is noted by, for instance, MEPs Zigmantas Balčytis (S&D, Lithuania) and Poreba.²¹¹ Furthermore, MEP Kofod states that NS2 makes “a total Russian energy embargo on Ukraine” possible²¹².

Russia’s ability to exert pressure on not only Ukraine but other neighbouring countries as well comes up as a justification to oppose NS2 in some of the analysed parliamentary questions. Pressure could be exerted by directing gas through NS2 instead of through the current transit countries in Eastern Europe. This approach reflects the common European view that perceives Russia’s foreign policy as *realpolitik* driven, an approach which academic research often contrasts with the notion of the EU as a normative actor. It reflects the assumption that energy, as a crucial element to any country relying on energy imports, can be used and often is used as a foreign policy tool. Indeed, this assumption is explicitly expressed by the Council in the Energy Union Package.²¹³ This argument is further echoed by some MEPs, including Jiří Pospíšil (the Czech Republic, EPP) who in 2018 asked “Is the Commission not concerned about the strengthening of Russia’s political position” because, among other factors, NS2 enables “the Russian government to put

²⁰⁹ Fotyga, Anna Elżbieta (2015 Sep 30), “VP/HR - Propaganda war and the activities of the East StratCom Team”, E-013396/2015. Available at:

http://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/E-8-2015-013396_EN.pdf.

²¹⁰ “Polish PM calls Nord Stream 2 ‘weapon’ of hybrid warfare”, *RFE/RL*, 28 May 2018. Available at: <https://www.rferl.org/a/polish-pm-calls-nord-stream-2-weapon-of-hybrid-warfare/29255392.html>.

²¹¹ Balčytis, Zigmantas (2015 Sep 17), “Increase in the volume of supply through the Nord Stream II gas pipeline”, E-012882/2015. Available at: http://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/E-8-2015-012882_EN.pdf; Poreba, 2016 Jun 3.

²¹² Kofod, Jeppe (2015 Dec 17), “Nord Stream II”, P-015951/2015. Available at: http://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/P-8-2015-015951_EN.pdf.

²¹³ Council of the European Union, 2015 Feb 26.

economic pressure on Eastern European countries by limiting gas supplies through Ukraine and Belarus”²¹⁴. This argument was expressed by MEP Vaidere in 2015 already.²¹⁵ Moreover, there have been some less specific arguments related to power relations and how NS2 might change them. For instance, in an amendment suggestion to an ITRE report MEP Jakub Dalunde (Sweden, on behalf of Verts/ALE Group) highlights “the geopolitical implications of the project” and “the risk to further destabilise Ukraine”²¹⁶. Furthermore, as touched upon in the discussion on the diversification argument, NS2 is perceived to increase Germany’s dependence on Russian energy, which in turn would grant “Moscow stronger leverage for political blackmail against Berlin”, as argued by MEP Fotyga.²¹⁷ This can be understood to be particularly worrying due to Germany’s strong role at the centre of the EU.

Another externally oriented argument against NS2 uncovered is that the pipeline is not an economic venture but a political one. This argument has often been supported by evidence of unused existing capacity, as was done by MEPs Barekov and Krasnodębski in 2016 in the parliamentary question presented in chapter 3. It has to be noted, however, that the unused capacity argument is not as straight forward as it is made to seem, as it is at least partially due to EU regulation that requires third parties to have equal access to the distribution system, thus capping Gazprom’s ability to use OPAL, the onshore part of NS1, to 50 percent. Gazprom was subsequently allowed to increase its share to 80 percent in 2016, sparking criticism from Polish MEPs in particular, as presented in chapter 4.²¹⁸ Furthermore, Jacek Saryusz-Wolski (Poland, EPP) points to the negotiations between President Putin and German Vice-Chancellor of the time Sigmar Gabriel in 2015, which he argues contradicts “the ‘purely commercial’ nature of the project”²¹⁹. Here it is once more

²¹⁴ Pospíšil, 2018 Jul 20.

²¹⁵ Vaidere, 2015 Dec 15.

²¹⁶ ITRE, 2016 Jun 16.

²¹⁷ Fotyga, 2018 Jul 11.

²¹⁸ Karski, Karol (2015 May 21), “Use of the Opal gas pipeline and energy security”, E-000770/2015. Available at: http://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/E-8-2015-000770_EN.pdf; Piotr Poręba (2016 Oct 31); Czesak & Krasnodębski, (2016 Nov 17).

²¹⁹ Saryusz-Wolski, Jacek (2015 Dec 3), “Compatibility of the project for doubling the Nord Stream (NSII) capacity with EU energy security priorities”, P-015380/2015. Available at: http://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/P-8-2015-015380_EN.pdf.

clear that the role of the German government is key to understanding the division within the Union.

5.3. *Broadening political opposition to Nord Stream 2*

As this chapter has made evident, the external arguments are very closely linked to the internal ones; for instance, diversification is inherently linked to the role of Russia in the EU's energy mix while solidarity is a principle that can be extended to countries outside the EU's borders, too. Particularly significant examples of this interconnectedness are two official EU documents, one by the Parliament and the other by AFET. Both take note of some external issues related to NS2, like the role of Ukraine, but also the target of diversification and security concerns:

“[The European Parliament] Reiterates the crucial role of Ukraine in the European energy supply network; condemns the construction of the Nord Stream 2 pipeline, as it is a political project that poses a threat to European security and the efforts to diversify energy supply; calls for the project to be cancelled;”²²⁰

“[The European Parliament] Underlines that Russia and the EU will remain key economic partners in the foreseeable future, but Nord Stream 2 reinforces EU dependency on Russian gas supplies, threatens the EU internal market and is not in line with EU energy policy, and therefore needs to be stopped;”²²¹

It is noteworthy that these are not comments by individual MEPs but adopted Parliament statements. These recent documents reflect the perception that there is no improvement in EU-Russia relations in sight. Furthermore, only the latter statement is made after the incident on the Sea of Azov, highlighting the fact that the Parliament's stance towards the project had already become very critical before that escalation. A final point that is especially noteworthy about both of these statements is the direct call to stop the project completely. Most analysed documents from the EU institutions – in other words, excluding amendments and Parliamentary

²²⁰ AFET, 2018 Nov 16, p.16.

²²¹ Committee on Foreign Affairs (AFET) (2018 Nov 28), “Draft report on the state of EU-Russia political relations”, PE 630.526v01-00, p.5. Available at: <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?pubRef=-//EP//NONSGML+COMPARL+PE-630.526+01+DOC+PDF+V0//EN&language=EN>.

questions – only express concern and demand compliance with regulation instead of proposing blocking the project. These two documents thus represent a clear turn to a more active stance towards NS2. Combining these examples with the evolution of the Commission’s stance, outlined earlier in this chapter, it is clear that the Parliament and the Commission hold a much stricter stance against the project than the Council.

As the above citations show, criticism of NS2 has only become stronger as the project has advanced. Indeed, the most radical comments regarding NS2 have been presented during 2018, the last year included in the analysis. Arguments from 2018 also increasingly reflect a perception that the pipeline threatens European security not only in the energy sphere but more broadly. Although similar arguments have been voiced before, they nevertheless become more apparent in the more recent documents. Documents analysed from early 2018 onwards also call for a more active approach towards regulating NS2 and even openly support blocking the construction of NS2. This change reflects the continued mistrust between the EU and Russia – although the Sea of Azov conflict in late 2018 pushed the tension between the two actors even further, the frozen conflict instigated by the annexation of Crimea and dispute over the conflict in Eastern Ukraine had successfully instilled an ever-deepening atmosphere of mistrust in Europe already before this. For instance, Dariusz Rosati and Julia Pitera (Poland, EPP) suggest the Parliament should condemn “the construction of Nord Stream 2 project as it is a political project proposing a threat to security”²²², while MEP Fotyga argues NS2 contributes to “de-facto co-funding by European companies of Russia’s hybrid and conventional warfare capabilities”²²³.

It should be highlighted that this line of argument is also present in European debate outside of the EU institutions. For instance, in April 2018, 33 representatives, from nine countries²²⁴ signed a written declaration in the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe titled “Nord Stream 2 and Russian gas: new tools of hybrid war”, where it was stated that:

²²² AFET, 2018 Sep 10, p.72.

²²³ Fotyga, 2018 Jul 11.

²²⁴ Estonia, Georgia, Latvia, Norway, Poland, Slovakia, Sweden, the UK, Ukraine.

“Recently leaked files from the European Commission show covered-up abusive behaviour in favour of Gazprom by Brussels (“The Telegraph” article on 12 April 2018). This fact confirms political background to control energy supply to the European Union by Russian gas monopolist in collusion with European law and covert support by European officials. ... We would like to draw attention to Nord Stream 2 (NS2) project that is far from being purely a commercial venture. ... The only purpose justifying Gazprom’s active engagement in redundant pipeline projects is to circumvent the traditional gas transmission routes through Ukraine, Slovakia, Poland, and Hungary to pursue a geopolitical agenda by the Russian government.”²²⁵

The article referred to here reveals that Gazprom’s violations of EU law were deliberate and the company used its market power “fragment the EU’s unified energy market with coercive pricing policies”²²⁶. Furthermore, the discovered files are said to prove that Germany has benefitted from better trade deals with Russia at the expense of other EU states. Interestingly, no mention of this was discovered in the EU documents analysed. The reason could be that these accusations were not explicitly linked to NS2 and thus no documents referring to these revelations were found in the search. However, accounting for the strong opposition to NS2 within the EU, it is nevertheless curious that these accusations did not come up in the analysis of the intra-EU debate.

Finally, it is important to touch upon the German opposition to NS2. The analysed documents highlight especially the role of Rebecca Harms (Verts/ALE). As a member of ITRE, MEP Harms has been well positioned to comment on the pipeline. She has argued against NS2 based on diversification, decarbonisation and Ukraine’s future prosperity.²²⁷ Furthermore, she has noted how Germany’s cooperation with Russia on NS2 has caused mistrust within the Union.²²⁸ It is also noteworthy that it was on MEP Harms who published the joint open letter on Nord Stream 2, addressed

²²⁵ Council of Europe Parliamentary Assembly (2018), “Nord Stream 2 and Russian gas: new tools of hybrid war”, Written declaration No. 659. Available at: <http://assembly.coe.int/nw/xml/XRef/Xref-XML2HTML-en.asp?fileid=24764&lang=en> (Last accessed: 2 May 2019).

²²⁶ Evans-Pritchard, Ambrose (2018), “Leaked EU files show Brussels cover-up and collusion on Putin’s Gazprom abuses”, *Telegraph*, 12 Apr 2018. Available at: <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/business/2018/04/12/leaked-eu-files-show-brussels-cover-up-collusion-putins-gazprom/>.

²²⁷ ITRE, 2017 Oct 11.

²²⁸ Ibid.

to Chancellor Merkel.²²⁹ The letter asked the German government to withdraw its support to NS2, to show solidarity with the Union, and to follow the will of the Commission and the Parliament. It letter was signed by 69 MEPs from 21 countries representing five different political groups²³⁰ as well as some national MPs, highlighting the cross-border and cross-party opposition to NS2.

As this chapter has made clear, majority of the debate on NS2 within the EU has been framed within what can be called a political context. As identified in this chapter, many arguments for and against the project are related to regulatory issues, EU values like solidarity, EU strategy including diversification, and external considerations like the role of Ukraine. This is in line with for instance Szulecki's research, which argues it is exactly the internal dimension that receives the most attention in the EU's energy policy, as opposed to the external dimension that regards, for instance, supplier relations.²³¹ This is an interesting result as most of the media coverage, for instance, tends to quote the role of Gazprom and Russia as the most controversial factor of NS2. This is partly true – appeals to solidarity and diversification, for instance, are made in relation to Russia. Nevertheless, it is noteworthy that the debate in the EU has focused on the internal dimension as opposed to the external one.

Furthermore, as highlighted on multiple occasions, the internal and external political dimensions are inherently interconnected. Additionally, as stated in the beginning of this chapter, it is important to note that political arguments very often appear together. Excellent examples of these are the 2016 written declaration by a group of 12 MEPs²³², the 2018 parliamentary question by MEP Fotyga, and indeed the joint open letter published by MEP Harms. All of these documents list multiple

²²⁹ "Joint open letter", 2018 Nov 6.

²³⁰ Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, France, Germany, Hungary, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, Spain, Sweden, and the UK; ALDE, ECR, EPP, S&D, and Verts/ALE.

²³¹ Szulecki, 2016.

²³² Turmes, Claude, Auštrevičius, Petras, Bütikofer, Reinhard, Hökmark, Gunnar, Krasnodębski, Zdzisław, Landsbergis, Gabrieliū, Poche, Miroslav, Ropé, Bronis, Saryusz-Wolski, Jacek, Telička, Pavel, van Baalen, Johannes Cornelis & Zanonato, Flavio (2016 Jun 7), "Written declaration submitted under Rule 136 of the Rules of Procedure on the doubling of the capacity of the Nord Stream pipeline", PE576.680v01-00. Available at: <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?pubRef=-//EP//NONSGML+WDECL+P8-DCL-2016-0023+0+DOC+PDF+V0//EN&language=EN>; Fotyga, 2018 Jul 11.

political arguments against NS2: internally oriented arguments like compatibility with TEP, principles of solidarity and trust, and goal of diversification, as well as externally oriented arguments like increased Russian leverage and negative consequences to Ukraine.

6. Conclusion

This thesis has shown that it has been the opponents of NS2 which have dominated the discussion within the EU. The analysis revealed no arguments explicitly in favour of NS2 in neither the environmental nor the economic dimension, and even in the political dimension only a few documents supporting the pipeline project were discovered. As already discussed in the introduction, this could be partly because of a selection bias resulting from how the analysed documents were chosen. Furthermore, the nature of the parliamentary questions, which have been the main target of analysis, is often critical, perhaps because they are used in a way to raise debate and challenge the status quo. However, as all the main EU institutions have expressed concern of and even direct opposition to the project, the more plausible reason for the lack of arguments supporting NS2 is simply that only a few have been presented. This is explained by the fact that the main supporters of the pipeline project are the investor countries' governments. Thus accordingly, the Council, which is formed by the representatives of Member States' governments, had not approved new gas market legislation by the end of 2018. However, it is noteworthy that even the Council has expressed concern over NS2. Thus, even though the Council has been reluctant to take action regarding NS2, its future actions are constrained and it seems unlikely the Council would offer its support to the project at any point.

The second central result of this thesis is that out of those opposing arguments, it has been arguments related to the internal political dimension that have been most often mobilised in the debate. Naturally, the 'Russia factor' is constantly present in these arguments too; for instance, arguments appealing to solidarity and diversification can almost always be argued to implicitly relate to Russia, even if it is not explicitly stated so. Thus, understanding the context of the currently tense EU-Russian relations is crucial for understanding the debate around NS2. Nevertheless, it has been the internally oriented arguments that have dominated the debate. Arguments of solidarity and diversification, to use the same example as above, have been justified with references to the EU's energy strategy and regulation, not

external policy. This highlights how energy policy can connect the domestic and the foreign policy levels, and is a truly multi-dimensional policy realm.

Furthermore, this second central research result also highlights the importance of understanding the internal dynamics of the EU. Although the role that Russia plays in the European energy policy cannot be overestimated, it is clearly also crucial to pay attention to issues within the union. With reference to NS2, it seems to be particularly important to focus on the perceptions on and the role of Germany. This result supports the arguments presented by Vihma and Wigell, as presented in the introduction, as they also draw attention to Germany's role and the possible consequences NS2 can have on Germany's reputation within the EU.

Although it has been the internal political arguments that have been the most prominent in the debate, the connections between the different dimensions are strong. Indeed, especially documents arguing against NS2 often use multiple arguments from different dimensions to make their case. The examples given at the end of chapter 5 show this well: documents can list, for instance, Ukraine's role as a transit country, threats to energy security especially in Central and South-Eastern countries, environmental concerns, compatibility with TEP, Gazprom's demonstrated abuse of market power, as well as the principles of solidarity, trust and diversification as reasons to oppose NS2.

Moreover, as emphasised earlier, the classifications used here are non-exclusive and there is significant overlap between the different groups. This is most visible between the economic and political dimensions, and indeed the economy and politics should not be treated as clearly separated spheres. For instance, market liberalisation and monopoly policies are a political decision and although they can be backed up by economic theory, they could be defined as a question of prioritisation. Similarly, many economic questions relate to solidarity: does the EU's solidarity lie with its eastern Members, who suffer negative economic impacts by NS2 in the form of losing transit fees, or its Western Members, to whom NS2 could deliver cheaper fuel? Should the EU compensate for those losses? What about the economic effects on the EU's Eastern partner countries like Belarus and Ukraine? Although there is less overlap with the environmental dimension, as this thesis has shown, environmental arguments have typically been mobilised as "supporting

arguments” instead of main arguments, underlining the interconnectedness of the different dimensions.

Thus, the classifications chosen here are very much interconnected and indeed sometimes it is difficult to tell which group an argument naturally falls into. Another division of arguments would have of course been possible. For instance, arguments could be classified into regulatory and strategy dimensions, where arguments related to, for instance, TEP and the new Gas Directive would fall under the first category and arguments related to, for example, solidarity and diversification would belong to the latter. However, a similar issue of overlapping classifications would probably affect this division as well. Indeed, the different dimensions of energy policy are so interconnected that struggles to classify arguments would probably emerge regardless of the chosen groups. The clarity of choosing the broad dimensions of environment, economics and politics, however, provide the most flexible framework for discovering new arguments and tying them into the existing research. Furthermore, for the documents analysed in this thesis, the three-dimensional division was the best option.

The analysis has not focused on a chronological presentation of arguments, except to illustrate the changing stances of the main EU institutions: the Commission, the Council and the Parliament. The reason that chronological analysis was not included is simply that, as is evident from the analysis of the different dimensions, the different arguments both for and against NS2 have been used throughout the period from 2012 to 2018, and no specific trend in their popularity was detected. Although, as highlighted in the end of chapter 5, the political arguments have changed somewhat and become more condemning in 2018 than they were in earlier years, they have dominated the debate from the beginning.

Although not explicitly discussed, this thesis also reveals how the division within the EU mostly follows national borders, not political affiliations. This supports the argument that the division on NS2 is mostly apparent on an inter-governmental level as is clear from the Council’s reluctance to regulate NS2. The most vocal opponents of NS2 have been MEPs Fotyga, Poręba and Wiśniewska, all representing Poland. This fits well into the existing literature on NS2 that highlights especially Poland’s opposition to the pipeline. Other MEPs whose contributions to the debate

this thesis has touched upon more frequently are, for instance MEP Paet from Estonia and MEP Kofod from Denmark, which further confirms the existing idea of opposition to NS2 from the Baltic Countries and Denmark. This also underlines how opposition to NS2 is more closely connected to nationality than political affiliation, as these MEPs represent three different political groups: ALDE, ECR and S&D.

However, it is also crucial to note that this claim is not always true. For representatives of those countries that on a governmental level support NS2, political affiliation can be observed to matter. Thus, not all of the opponents of NS2 come from the transit countries, as is generally argued. For instance, the written declaration against NS2 presented at the end of chapter 5 featured signatures from the Czech Republic, Lithuania, Poland and Sweden, but also Germany, Italy, Luxembourg, and the Netherlands. Here it can be specified that on a general level, it is especially the representatives of Verts/ALE but also of ALDE and S&D who tend to oppose NS2 despite their national government's possible support for the project. Furthermore, it should be highlighted in particular that there is considerably opposition to NS2 within Germany, as revealed by some of the analysed documents.

This thesis does not argue that there is no division in the EU regarding NS2. Instead, it has shown that the division is perhaps not as deep as would appear, with many actors within the EU arguing against the project. Furthermore, it is important to avoid simple generalisations of those against and for the project. For instance, as stated above, although the German government has continued to support NS2, there is also considerable opposition to the project in Germany. And although not discussed in this thesis, Germany and France have received support for NS2 in the Council from, for example, Greece and Cyprus; however, most studies do not account for these countries and their perceptions of the pipeline.

Thus, in order to fully understand European perceptions of NS2, it would be interesting to see a similar analysis conducted on national debates. The utilisation of the framework provided here – classifying arguments into environmental, economic and political groups – would allow insightful comparison to be made with the EU level. For instance, it would be interesting to see whether national debates have also been centred around the political dimension, or are environmental or economic arguments more prominent? Some work has already been done on the

national level. For instance, as discussed in the introduction, a framework utilising geoeconomics and geopolitics as the classifications have been applied in research on Sweden. Although the most vocal countries, for example, Germany and Poland, would be obvious and interesting targets of research, it is also important to include other countries such as Spain and Belgium in the analysis. The extent to which NS2 has been debated in the less visible countries could offer interesting insights. The growing gas network interconnectivity within the EU means that NS2 might affect national markets more broadly in the EU, and thus no country should be excluded from the analysis.

Another interesting path for research would be a comparative study of the discourse related to NS2 and one or more other pipeline projects in the EU. This thesis has shown that NS2 has been framed mostly in political terms – is this true for other pipeline projects? What are the differences between discussions on Russian pipelines and those originating from other partner countries like Norway or Algeria? This research could be conducted from two interesting but distinct approaches. Firstly, it would be interesting to see the research on the securitization of the EU's energy policy implemented on a comparative case. Secondly, as this thesis has highlighted, the EU's energy policy is a multidimensional issue, influenced by both the union's internal dynamics as well as its external relations with supplier countries. Thus, future research could also explore these tensions in relation to different projects and supplier countries.

This thesis represents the first systematic, in-depth analysis of the different arguments used to justify stances in favour of and opposing NS2. As the new gas market legislation is yet to be formally approved by the Council and the Parliament, and as the NS2 pipeline is not yet completed, the debate on the project is still very much ongoing. Thus, it remains to be seen whether individual Member States' and EU institutions' approaches will shift or remain the same, and whether new arguments for or against the pipeline will appear in the debate.

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